Yehezkel Kaufmann and the Reinvention of Jewish Biblical Scholarship

Edited by: Jindo, Job Y. ; Sommer, Benjamin D. ; Staubli, Thomas

Abstract: The biblical scholar, historian, and Jewish thinker Yehezkel Kaufmann (1889–1963) is best known for two magisterial works: a two-volume interpretation of Jewish history, Golah ve-nekhar (Exile and Alienation, 1928–1932), and a four-volume study of biblical religion, Toledot ha-emunah ha-yisre'elit (A History of the Israelite Faith, 1937–1956). Toledot in particular is the most monumental achievement of modern Jewish biblical scholarship. No other figure, not even Martin Buber, has had such a profound influence on the work of Jewish scholars of the Bible. Whether by supporting his ideas with new evidence, modifying them in light of new discoveries or methods, or attacking them, and whether addressing his work explicitly or implicitly, a substantial amount of modern Jewish biblical criticism builds upon the foundation set by Kaufmann. The latter's phenomenological analysis of biblical monotheism as well as his critique of theoretical and methodological assumptions that are still dominant in historical studies in general, and biblical scholarship in particular, are an invaluable asset for those who engage in biblical scholarship, historical studies, and comparative religion. The idea of this volume was conceived at an international symposium held in Switzerland, from June 10–11, 2014, "Yehezkel Kaufmann and the Reinvention of Jewish Exegesis of the Bible in Bern." This gathering was held at the Universities of Bern and of Fribourg in order to commemorate the centenary of Yehezkel Kaufmann's matriculation at the University of Bern on May 5, 1914, and to document and reassess the significance of his legacy and its reception. The symposium had three foci, corresponding with sections I-III of this volume: Kaufmann's biography and intellectual background, his impact on Jewish studies, and his contribution to modern biblical scholarship. The volume provides a comprehensive and multi-faceted account of Kaufmann's work, through which Anglophone readers, students and scholars alike, can explore the hitherto unrecognized significance and profundity of Kaufmann's legacy. It includes not only the symposium papers but also other essays, including two testimonies by two of his students, Menahem Haran and Moshe Greenberg and some of Kaufmann's own writings—all heretofore unavailable in English—that are crucial for a fuller appreciation of his life project.

Jindo / Sommer / Staubli (eds.) Yehezkel Kaufmann and the Reinvention of Jewish Biblical Scholarship

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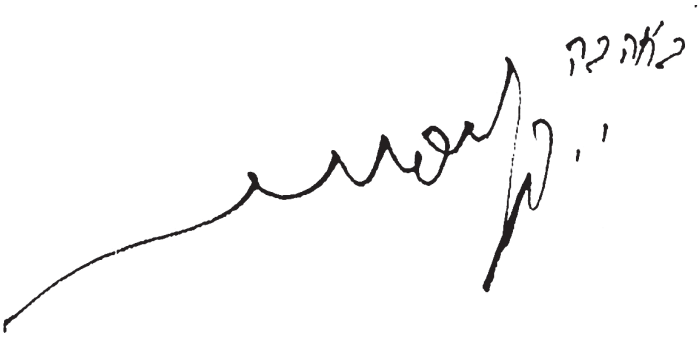

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The symposium's participants on June 11, 2014, from left to right, standing: Eva Tyrell, Thomas Staubli, Israel Knohl, Ziony Zevit, Adrian Schenker, Thomas Krapf; sitting: René Bloch, Othmar Keel, Nili Wazana, Job Jindo, Benjamin Sommer (photo courtesy: Christoph Knoch).

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(translated into English for the first time)

Introduction

The biblical scholar, historian, and Jewish thinker Yehezkel Kaufmann (1889–1963) is best known for two magisterial works: a two-volume interpretation of Jewish history, *Golah ve-nekhar* (Exile and Alienation, 1928–1932), and a four-volume study of biblical religion, *Toledot ha-emunah ha-yisre'elit* (A History of the Israelite Faith, 1937–1956).[1] *Toledot* in particular is the most monumental achievement of modern Jewish biblical scholarship. His influence is manifest most obviously in works by disciples who expand upon his approach–for example, Moshe Greenberg (1928–2010), Menahem Haran (1924–2015), Jacob Milgrom (1923–2010), Yochanan Muffs (1932–2009), Nahum Sarna (1923–2005), and Moshe Weinfeld (1925–2009).

A great deal of modern Jewish biblical scholarship consists of a dialogue with Kaufmann. In Israel, for example, Israel Knohl and Baruch Schwartz have modified and built upon Kaufmann's work, and scholars like Alexander Rofé have respectfully taken issue with it.[2] Kaufmann's approach to prophecy and the composition of prophetic books comes into full flower in the commentaries of Shalom Paul.[3] In the United States, Jeffrey Tigay's work on monotheism provides extrabiblical support for one of Kaufmann's central contentions.[4] Benjamin Sommer's treatment of monotheism is a lengthy defense of a more flexible version of Kaufmann's thesis, and his approach to the composition of prophetic books is thoroughly

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1 A list of Kaufmann's work translated from Hebrew is to be found at the end of the Kaufmann-section of this volume.

2 Israel Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995); Israel Knohl, *The Divine Symphony: The Bible's Many Voices* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2003); Israel Knohl, *Biblical Beliefs* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2007); Baruch Schwartz, "The Priestly Account of the Theophany and Lawgiving at Sinai," in *Texts, Temples, and Traditions: A Tribute to Menahem Haran* (eds. Michael V. Fox, et al.; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 103–34; Baruch Schwartz, *The Holiness Legislation: Studies in the Priestly Code*, [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1999); Alexander Rofé, "Third Isaiah, After All," [in Hebrew] in *Studies in the Composition of the Torah and Prophetic Books* (ed. Alexander Rofe; Jerusalem: Akademon, 1985), 108–26; Alexander Rofé, *Introduction to the Literature of the Hebrew Bible* (Jerusalem Biblical Studies, 9; Jerusalem: Simor, 2009), esp. part 2, chap. 3, and part 3, chaps. 1–2.

3 Shalom Paul, *Amos: A Commentary on the Book of Amos* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991); Shalom Paul, *Isaiah 40–66* (Eerdmans Critical Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011).

4 Jeffrey Tigay, *You Shall Have No Other Gods: Israelite Religion in the Light of Hebrew Inscriptions* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986).

Kaufmannian.[5] In both the United States and Israel, the first book-length works on inner-biblical exegesis (by Michael Fishbane and Yair Zakovitch) picked up an insight from the fourth volume of *Toledot* and shaped it into a new scholarly subdiscipline.[6]

Kaufmann's contribution to modern Jewish biblical scholarship is also significant in works that make no mention of him. Just as biblical scholars often simply refer to "the Documentary Hypothesis" without citing its originators, because the hypothesis is so central to biblical criticism that no footnote is necessary; so, too, Kaufmann's ideas appear often in Jewish biblical scholarship without reference to Kaufmann's work, because it has become, for some Jewish biblical scholars, simply part of the air one breathes. This is the case, for example, with Tikva Frymer-Kensky's book on women, culture and the Biblical transformation of pagan myth.[7] The author presents elegant restatements of Kaufmann's approach to monotheism with especially sensitive reference to Mesopotamian literature. Yet she does not mention Kaufmann. This omission occurs not because she hesitates to acknowledge a source—in fact her scholarship is especially generous to her sources and teachers—but because Kaufmann's understanding of biblical monotheism is so fundamental to her scholarly world that the source need not be cited.[8]

Similarly, Kaufmann's perspectives suffuse four of the five volumes of the Jewish Publication Society's Pentateuch commentary.[9] These volumes

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5 Benjamin D. Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), esp. 145–74, 259–75. See also the essay "Monotheism," *in The Hebrew Bible: A Princeton Guide* (ed. John Barton; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 239–79, as well as his essay in this volume. On prophetic texts, see, e.g., Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40-66* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

6 Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985); Yair Zakovitch, *An Introduction to Inner-Biblical Interpretation* (in Hebrew; Even-Yehudah: Reches, 1992). These books extend observations found in *Toledot*, 4:291–93 327–29, 331–38, 341–42, 346–50. Another key influence on Fishbane and Zakovitch was the work of Kaufmann's contemporary at the Hebrew University, Isac Leo Seeligmann, especially his essays, "Voraussetzungen der Midraschexegese," *Supplements to VT* 1 (1953): 150–81, and "The Beginnings of Midrash in the Books of Chronicles" [in Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 49 (1980): 14–32.

7 Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *In the Wake of the Goddesses: Women, Culture, and the Biblical Transformation of Pagan Myth* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

8 Many of the teachers who introduced her to biblical studies—especially Yochanan Muffs, Shalom Paul, and Moshe Greenberg—advanced Kaufmann's scholarship.

9 Namely, the commentaries on Genesis and Exodus, written by Nahum Sarna (Philadelphia: JPS, 1989 and 1991, respectively), on Numbers by Jacob Milgrom (1989), and on Deuteronomy by Jeffrey Tigay (1996). The volume on Leviticus by Baruch Levine (1989) is the single exception. All this is not claim that every view expressed by Sarna, Milgrom, and Tigay is identical to that of Kaufmann; their views are sometimes more nuanced, and they take into account more recent discoveries and perspectives as they update Kaufmann's legacy.

seldom cite specific page numbers from Kaufmann's works, but the pervasive nature of his influence is clear from their approach to monotheism, the ways they view the dating of Pentateuchal texts, and their tendency to shun simplistic historicist or reductionist explanations in favor of literary and theological interpretation.

Kaufmann's influence is perhaps even more significant in works by modern Jewish scholars who set out to disagree with some of his central theses. Thus both Jon Levenson and Michael Fishbane have published books that take issue with Kaufmann's claim that biblical Israel's religion was anti-mythological.[10] No less than the work of Kaufmann's epigones, these books, precisely by arguing against one of the core ideas of *Toledot*, show how some of the most intentionally Jewish biblical scholars conduct their work in dialogue with Kaufmann.

Whether by supporting his ideas with new evidence, modifying them in light of new discoveries or methods, or attacking them, and whether addressing his work explicitly or implicitly, a substantial amount of modern Jewish biblical criticism builds upon the foundation set by Kaufmann. No other figure, not even Martin Buber, has had such a profound influence on the work of Jewish scholars of the Bible.

The reception of Kaufmann's work outside Jewish circles has been limited, however. His *tours de force* remain underappreciated or altogether unknown among non-Hebrew readership, for his works are written in modern Hebrew and intended primarily for Jewish audience. Still less known is the depth and breadth of his erudition and outstanding philosophical competency. In fact his doctorate, received in 1918 from the University of Bern in Switzerland, was in philosophy. We intend the present volume to begin to rectify this situation.[11]

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[10] Jon D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988); Michael A. Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[11] Monograph-length works that introduce Kaufmann's scholarship in English or German include: Thomas Krapf, *Yehezkel Kaufmann: ein Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg zur Theologie der Hebräischen Bibel* (Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum, 1990); Thomas Krapf, *Die Priesterschrift und die vorexilische Zeit: Yehezkel Kaufmanns vernachlässigter Beitrag zur Geschichte der biblischen Religion* (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992); Aly Elrefaei, *Wellhausen and Kaufmann: Ancient Israel and Its Religious History in the Works of Julius Wellhausen and Yehezkel Kaufmann* (BZAW 490; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016). Krapf's biography of Kaufmann contains very valuable data (interviews etc.), along with a comprehensive list of Kaufmann's publications. Emanuel Green's unpublished dissertation, *Universalism and Nationalism as Reflected in the Writings of Yehezkel Kaufmann with Special Emphasis on the Biblical Period* (PhD diss., New York University, 1968), also contains an excellent biography of Kaufmann, along with a concise summary of each of Kaufmann's works as well as his key concepts. Laurence J. Silberstein's unpublished dissertation, *History and Ideology: The Writings of Yehezkel Kaufmann* (PhD diss., Brandeis University, 1972), presents an exhaustive analysis of Kaufmann's *Golah ve-nekhar*. Part of this work was

The idea of this volume was conceived at an international symposium held in Switzerland, from June 10 to 11, 2014, "Yehezkel Kaufmann and the Reinvention of Jewish Exegesis of the Bible in Bern." The symposium was organized by the Department of Biblical Studies at the University of Fribourg in cooperation with the Institute for Jewish Studies at the University of Bern, in order to commemorate the centenary of Yehezkel Kaufmann's—or Hazkel Koifman's—matriculation at the University of Bern on May 5, 1914, and to document and reassess the significance of his legacy and its reception. The symposium had three foci, corresponding with sections I-III of this volume: Kaufmann's biography and intellectual background, his impact on Jewish studies, and his contribution to modern biblical scholarship. The appreciation of Kaufmann's life work varied among symposium participants—some generally favorable, some rather critical—but they all agreed that his work merits a significant place both in Jewish intellectual history and in modern biblical scholarship.

The symposium's participants thought it would worthwhile to publish the papers, not like standard proceedings but rather as an "instrumental compendium," a reference text that provides a comprehensive and multifaceted account of Kaufmann's work, through which English readers, students and scholars alike, can explore the hitherto unrecognized significance and profundity of Kaufmann's legacy. Accordingly, the volume includes not only the symposium papers but also other essays, including some of Kaufmann's own writings in a separate fourth section of this volume—all heretofore unavailable in English—that are crucial for a fuller appreciation of his life project.

The volume begins with a section on Kaufmann's life. Thomas Krapf provides a biography of the man and portrayed the social and intellectual contexts that shaped him and in which he worked: Eastern European Jewry, the central European academy, and pre-statehood and early statehood Israel in Haifa and Jerusalem. Krapf also gives a sense of the inner life of this lonely man of learning. Krapf was the first non-Jewish biblical scholar who brought to mind the importance of Kaufmann's studies to his German-reading colleagues—with rather modest success to say it gently. His essay not only summarizes all hitherto known relevant facts and dates but also enriches our picture with new insight.

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thoroughly revised and published as "'Exile and Alienhood': Yehezkel Kaufmann on the Jewish Nation," in *Texts and Responses: Studies Presented to Nahum N. Glatzer on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* (eds. Michael A. Fishbane and Paul R. Flohr; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975), 239–56; "Historical Sociology and Ideology: A Prolegomenon to Yehezkel Kaufmann's 'Golah v'Nekhar,'" in *Essays in Modern Jewish History: A Tribute to Ben Halpern* (eds. Frances Malino and Phyllis Cohen Albert; Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1982), 173–95.

The next essay, by Thomas Staubli, focuses on the middle period, Kaufmann's years at the University of Bern during World War I, when the city was an Eldorado of Jewish teachers and students of every shade who fled from riots and civil commotion. Staubli shows how deeply philosophical Kaufmann's orientation was from his early years. Aside from the fact that Kaufmann wrote his main oeuvre in Hebrew, this may be a further reason why his historic approach not really entered the field of modern biblical criticism. The article originally written in German,[12] was slightly expanded for this English version, translated by Jeremiah Riemer.

An essay by Kaufmann's disciple Moshe Greenberg—known, *inter alia*, for his abridged English translation of Kaufmann's *Toledot*—describes personal and intimate facets of Kaufmann as reflected in their private correspondence.

The volume continues in a second section with studies of the relationship of Kaufmann's work to other modern Jewish thinkers and to modern Jewish history. In "Is Kaufmann's *Toledot* a 'Jewish' Project? Empirical Research Between Naturalism and Supernaturalism," Job Jindo presents a radically new reading of Kaufmann, showing that Kaufmann's method and his critique of Wellhausen and other Protestant biblical critics are based not merely on Jewish concerns but more fundamentally on empirical and critical ones. Indeed Kaufmann's main disagreement is less with Wellhausen than it is with the entire immanentist philosophical and historical project that stems from Spinoza. He would have the same sorts of criticisms of a specifically Jewish or supernaturalist scholarship of the Bible. Thus Kaufmann's methods and perspectives are not particularly Jewish in nature but reflect a particular, anti-reductionist approach to studying not only religion but any sort of human creativity.

Ziony Zevit, in "Yehezkel Kaufmann: Observations about his Major Ideas in the Past, Almost Present, and the Immediate Future," begins by surveying many of the major intellectual influences on Kaufmann (both non-Jewish and Jewish; philosophical, philological, historical, ideological—i.e., Zionist). Zevit then provides a useful summary of his major theses concerning biblical religion. He further argues that Kaufmann's reception among Jewish biblical scholars is less influential than has generally been thought.

In "Yehezkel Kaufmann, R. Nachman Krochmal, and the 'Anxiety of Influence,'" Lawrence Kaplan discusses a less well known but highly significant influence on, and interlocutor with, Kaufmann: the nineteenth-century Jewish thinker Nachman Krochmal (1785–1840), author of *The*

[12] "Yehezkel Kaufmann: Die Berner Jahre eines Genies," in *Wie über Wolken: Jüdische Lebens- und Denkwelten in Stadt und Region Bern 1200-2000* (eds. R. Bloch and J. Picard, Zürich: Chronos 2014), 241–55. We thank Hans-Rudolf Wiedmer for the permission to publish an English translation of this article.

Guide of the Perplexed of the Time, a classic of the Eastern European Jewish Enlightenment. Kaufmann himself delineates the differences between his approach and Krochmal's, but Kaplan shows that the connections—and differences—between them were more complex and freighted than Kaufmann himself may have realized. In the course of making this argument, Kaplan echoes themes from the essays by Jindo and Zevit, showing that Kaufmann is, perhaps above all, to be read as a Jewish thinker, in dialogue with philosophers such as Krochmal and Maimonides, and not only as a historical-philological scholar of the Bible and Jewish history.

This second section concludes with an essay by the late Menahem Haran, Kaufmann's only doctoral student and later the Yehezkel Kaufmann Professor of Biblical Studies at the Hebrew University. His essay, "Judaism and Bible in the Worldview of Yehezkel Kaufmann"—originally published in Hebrew in 1990 and here translated into English by Leonard Levin—presents a penetrating overview of Kaufmann's life project. Readers unfamiliar with Kaufmann's work will find this essay to be an excellent gateway for appreciating the scope of Kaufmann's intellectual enterprise. We thank the World Union of Jewish Studies for the permission to publish an English translation of Haran's article, as well as Greenberg's essay mentioned above, both from *Mada'ei Hayahadut* 31 (1991).

The third section of the book focuses more specifically on Kaufmann's biblical scholarship. Israel Knohl, the current Yehezkel Kaufmann Professor of Biblical Studies at the Hebrew University, presents a bold revision of Kaufmann's approach to the history of monotheism in ancient Israel in his essay, "The Rise, Decline, and Renewal of the Biblical Revolution. Knohl argues that archaeological findings corroborate Kaufmann's contention that a religious revolution occurred at the very beginning of Israelite history. Along with Kaufmann, Knohl maintains that at that time, Israel thoroughly rejected idolatry—and with it also the institution of monarchy—and adopted the aniconic worship of a single deity. However, against Kaufmann, Knohl shows that later in the pre-exilic period, the rise of the monarchies in Judah and Israel led to the adoption of polytheistic practices in Israel. Only with the elimination of the monarchy did Israel experience a resurgence of monotheism in the exilic and post-exilic periods.

In "The Legacy of Yehezkel Kaufmann's Commentaries to Joshua and Judges," Nili Wazana points out the irony of two of Kaufmann's less-known works. Kaufmann interrupted the writing of *Toledot* to provide detailed commentaries on Joshua and Judges so as to argue that they supported his view that monotheism was a revolutionary innovation in early Israel. This required him to maintain that these two books are for the most part historically reliable and that they demonstrate that upon entering Canaan the Israelites quickly and decisively overcame the Canaanites. These theses have not won adherence—even among many scholars who consider them-

selves Kaufmann's followers—and hence these works are rarely studied. But Wazana shows that they are valuable, though not for the reasons that Kaufmann intended. Both commentaries are fine examples of close reading that were decades ahead of their time in their presentation of a literary method for analyzing biblical narrative. Further, they are both fine examples of Kaufmann's moderate approach to compositional questions throughout his oeuvre: he does not deny the several levels of composition in biblical texts, but he avoids the capricious and far-fetched discovery of multitudinous levels of composition, redaction, and supplementation that mar so much biblical critical scholarship.

In "Kaufmann and Recent Scholarship: Toward a Richer Discourse of Monotheism," Benjamin Sommer at once defends and refines Kaufmann's definition of monotheism. Sommer points out that when compared with definitions commonly used among biblical scholars, Kaufmann's definition exhibits both greater sophistication and greater utility from the point of view of the phenomenology of religion. But he also notes limitations and inconsistencies regarding Kaufmann's theory of the sudden appearance of monotheism early in the history ancient Israel. While Kaufmann's definition of monotheism is productive, his historical reconstruction of its origins is no less speculative than those of the biblical scholars he opposes. Sommer also points to examples of European scholarship that independently came up with approaches similar to Kaufmann, on the basis of types of evidence not yet known in Kaufmann's time. Two of these European scholars, Adrian Schenker and Othmar Keel respond to Sommer's essay, adding nuance and additional sources to Sommer's approach.

This section of the volume concludes with the lecture that Menahem Haran delivered on his appointment to the Kaufmann Chair at Hebrew University in 1968. The essay delineates the trajectory of biblical scholarship in modern Jewish tradition and the decisive role Kaufmann assumed in that trajectory. We thank the Hebrew University Magnes Press, for the permission to incorporate in this volume Haran's essay, which was originally distributed in an offprint format in 1970.

The fourth and final section of our volume includes key texts by Kaufmann that we make available in English for the first time. The thesis of Kaufmann's first great work, *Golah ve-nekhar* (Exile and Alienation), has generally remained unknown even among scholars of Jewish studies.[13] In the course of his work on Kaufmann, however, Thomas Krapf discovered in Kaufmann's papers "A Concise Summary of the work *Golah venekhar* (Exile and Alienation)," which Kaufmann penned in German in 1936.

[13] Only part of this work is available in English. See the list at the end of the Kaufmann section of this volume.

Krapf provides an English translation of this document, along with an introduction and useful annotations.

The second text on "General Characteristics of the Israelite Belief" is the ninth chapter of *Toledot* (vol. 1, 221–54), published 1937, which serves as the introduction to Kaufmann's phenomenological analysis of biblical religion. The essay addresses theological assumptions, still predominant in biblical studies, that Kaufmann thinks inimical for a phenomenological understanding of biblical religion. We thank Ms. Dvora Levinger of the Bialik Institute for permission to publish an English translation of that chapter.

The third text, printed in 1940, a review of Freud's monograph on Moses and the monotheistic faith, also evinces Kaufmann's approach to humanistic research. It is as much a logical critique of Freud as a historical or philological one, and thus it reminds us that Kaufmann was trained as a philosopher, who wrote a dissertation on the role of sufficient reason in modern continental philosopher.

The fourth text on "The Secret of National Creativity," encapsulates the gist of Kaufmann's exhaustive critique of methodological assumptions that were not only dominant in humanistic research of his day but remain deeply influential in the early 21st century—especially among biblical scholars. It originally appeared in the journal *Moznaim* 13 (1941) as a reply to reviews of the first volume of *Toledot*. In later editions of *Toledot*, it appears as the general introduction to the entire eight-volume set. The edition translated here is the original version that appeared in *Moznaim,* with original section headings that are omitted in the version of *Toledot*. We thank Mr. David Melamed of *Moznaim* for granting us permission to publish an English translation of that version, and for his permission to publish the translation of Kaufmann's review of Freud, which appeared in *Moznaim* 10 (1940).

We are extremely grateful to Lenny Levin for preparing superb translations of Kaufmann's essays, as well as Haran's recollection and Greenberg's; to Briah Cahana and Lawrence Kaplan for rendering an English translation of Kaufmann's review essay on Freud's book; to Thomas Krapf for his translation of Kaufmann's German summary of *Golah ve-nekhar*; and to Jeremiah Riemer for translating Thomas Staubli's essay. Mr. Richard Tupper of Chicago, Illinois, graciously agreed to proofread the volume, and we are grateful for the outstanding job he did, which has yielded a more polished and reader-friendly volume. Finally, our thanks to Ryan Higgins and Avraham Sommer for preparing the indices.

This book is a product of a pleasant, collaborative effort. Thomas Staubli originally conceived of the Kaufmann symposium at two neighboring universities, those of Fribourg and Bern. René Bloch, along with his right

hand, Eva Tyrell, joined Staubli to organize the symposium. Benjamin Sommer and Job Jindo joined Staubli to edit the volume itself, for which Staubli secured funding. The editors are deeply grateful to all participants in the conference, who contributed with well-prepared thoughtful papers, an open mind and human warmth to a very stimulating meeting. We acknowledge with great respect all those who supported this project financially: the very generous Dr. Celia Zwillenberg (Bern) and the Department of Biblical Studies for the symposium, the Nordmann-Foundation for the cost of translations, again Dr. Celia Zwillenberg and the Research Fund of the University of Fribourg for the subvention of the printing. We are indebted to Prof. Christoph Uehlinger and other editors of the OBO series for their prompt agreement to publish this volume in their series and Marcia Bodenmann for last-minute corrigenda.

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I.

Kaufmann's Life

Yehezkel Koifman: An Outline of his Life and Work[1]

Thomas M. KRAPF

"I don't have a biography, all I have are books—a bibliography."[2] This was the opening of a stimulating discussion, which Yehezkel Koifman concluded:[3] "Look, you were looking for a biography, and you found an idea instead."[4]

Koifman's self-estimation, according to which erudition and scholarship are the sole *raison d'être* of the savant, circumscribes several patterns determining his life and work—not least the non-physical, the quasi "metaphysical" propensity of his existence that appears to have translated into the personal tragedy of a creative genius of the 20th century.

A glance at Koifman's long list of publications with important contributions to a broad range of disciplines conveys a sense of the quantitative dimension of his intellectual work.[5] The qualitative dimension of his legacy is no less significant, as he had an impact on the world with a phenomenal scholarly work consisting of two opera magna and hundreds of studies and articles. In all likelihood Koifman had perceived enough of the effect of his work to be able to foresee that his legacy would reverberate in the intellec-

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1 This paper is based on (1) an intellectual biography I published over 25 years ago: Thomas Krapf, *Yehezkel Kaufmann: Ein Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg zur Theologie der Hebräischen Bibel* (Studien zu Kirche und Israel 11; Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum, 1990); and (2) on additional, hitherto unpublished research, on which I embarked after publishing the monograph in 1990. This material includes oral history, i.e. interviews I conducted from 1985 through 1998 with people, who had known Yehezkel Koifman. Some of their recollections referred as far back as the 1930s. In the following the inherently subjective quality of recollections of events and issues perceived in perspectives involving such large time spans needs to be borne in mind.

2 This is often quoted with a somewhat apocryphal ring: "I have no biography, only a bibliography": e.g., Moshe Greenberg, "Kaufmann on the Bible: An Appreciation," *Judaism* 13 (1964): 77; repr. in Moshe Greenberg, *Studies in the Hebrew Bible and Jewish Thought* (Philadelphia and Jerusalem: Jewish Publication Society, 1995), 175–88.

3 During the better part of his life K. used the Yiddish and Hebrew form of his name, "Koifman". In the following the German/English form "Kaufman(n)" is merely used (1) in the context of the biographic phases in Western Europe, when K. signed "Kaufman(n)," and (2) wherever relevant with regard to bibliographical data.

4 Avraham H. Elhanai, "Yehezkel Kaufmann," *Sihat Sofrim* (in Hebrew [Conversing with Authors]; Jerusalem: R. Mas, 1960), 86–92; quotes on pp. 88 and 92.

5 For the best, but nevertheless incomplete list of his publications see *Yehezkel Kaufmann Jubilee Volum*e. *Studies in Bible and Jewish Religion Dedicated to Yehezkel Kaufmann on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday (*ed. Menahem Haran; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1960), 1–6. Haran remembered Koifman being uncooperative regarding the compilation of his bibliography; for some additional titles see Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 143ff.

tual discourse of future generations. And yet, towards the end of his life he deeply regretted the high personal price he had paid for his great achievements: never having married, nor having raised children, he felt he had missed out on essential aspects of human existence. He was deeply troubled that it was too late to undo his mistake.

Existentially, Koifman resembled the traveler perennially sitting on his packed suitcase. His lifestyle was frugal, and he never possessed more than one suit at a time. Although he ranked among the great intellectuals of the 20th century, the few books in his possession fitted onto one or two bookshelves—probably taking up far less space than the body of his own publications. The commodity most precious to Koifman was time, which he invested assiduously into creating his ambitious life work.

A bibliography in lieu of a biography—this formidable notion of a phenomenal life work engulfing its author also circumscribes a paradox of Yehezkel Koifman and his legacy. To this day, his scholarship gives rise to discourse on a broad range of issues. The many important contributions based on Koifman's work in biblical studies, and the impressive array of creative scholars indebted to his thought conjure up associations with phenomena such as a "Wellhausen School" or schools of Koifman's contemporaries, e.g., Herrmann Gunkel, Sigmund Mowinckel, and William Foxwell Albright. And yet, despite Koifman's significant intellectual influence, he never took any proactive initiative to found an academic school of thought. Thus, there is good cause to surmise that the actual effect of his phenomenal contribution to scholarship lags far behind its potential impact.

To a large extent this appears to result from Koifman's personality, which was also decisive with regard to his personal tragedy. He was a vulnerable, shy and unsociable introvert, who did not feel at ease interacting with more than one or two interlocutors at a time. When buying a sofa for his study he demanded the *most uncomfortable* seating in stock, because he was anxious to discourage his visitors from distracting him for long… Although most people who met him, describe him as a stimulating conversant in a contained circle of two or three pairs of eyes,[6] his presence was experienced as uncharismatic whenever he had to face a larger audience. In such situations, he was typically haunted by stage fright, which even induced him to stay away from prize award ceremonies of which he was the laureate. On some occasions, he could not even accept the compromise of addressing the audience from behind a screen. Naturally, this timidity that prevented him from communicating at ease with medium sized and large audiences manifested itself as a serious handicap in his role as a teacher.[7]

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6 In this context Haran used to describe Koifman as "a brilliant conversationalist," see for example Haran, "Judaism and Bible in the Worldview of Yehezkel Kaufmann" (in this volume pp. 147–163), see p. 147.

7 Interview with Abraham Malamat on 18 October, 1995.

A considerable number of Koifman's students, many of whom became scholars in their own right, attest to his dismal performance as an uninspiring secondary school and university teacher.[8] His forte was his creative thinking, his research and his writing. In paradigmatic terms, Koifman thrived in the contained silent spaces of the desk and the library, but was unable to interact with the physicality of the world, of which he produced profound analyses and interpretations in writing.

1. Yehezkel Koifman's Early Life[9]

Yehezkel Koifman was born in December 1889, on 24 Kislev, 5650, the eve of Hanukkah.[10] His birth-place, Dunajewzi, was a *shtetl* in western Ukraine. His *haredi*[11] family belonged to the broad stratum of impoverished Jewish traders and peddlers who struggled to eke out an existence in the misery of the Pale of the Settlement.[12]

As was common in this social milieu, education was highly valued in Koifman's large family. Very little is known about the family of the man, who would discuss his books, while saying next to nothing about his professed non-life, the very context out of which his phenomenal bibliography

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8 Although Koifman was only appointed to a professorship on the eve of his retirement age, it is nevertheless remarkable that no one ever succeeded to complete a doctorate under his supervision. His only PhD student, Menahem Haran, ultimately obtained his doctorate without Koifman's blessing, because the latter refused to uphold his support of the process, which at that stage had been almost accomplished.

9 For the following see Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 16ff. and Elhanai, "Yehezkel Kaufmann," 89–90. Regrettably, I was not aware of Elhanai's documentation of one of Koifman's rare testimonies about his childhood and youth when I wrote my monograph on Koifman. The present paper provides a welcome opportunity to amend this lacuna.

10 That is, 4 December, 1889 according to the Julian calender, which was in use in Russia at the time, before its abolition by the Bolcheviks in 1918. According to the Gregorian calendar, Koifman's birthday corresponds to the 17 December, 1889. While the Julian version of his birth date appears in Koifman's ID documents, the Gregorian date figures in publications about him.

11 Jewish traditional orthodox.

12 In 1791, Catherine the Great (1729–1796) had established the Pale of the Settlement, the area in the Tsarist Empire, where Jews were permitted to abide and work. Its relatively small dimensions were deliberately designed to produce counter-productive population density: its Jewish and non-Jewish inhabitants were locked in fierce economic competion, most of them struggling to survive.—At the end of the 19th century, when Koifman was growing up, 94% of Russian Jewry lived in the Pale, which at that time included the ten provinces of Congress Poland. In the course of the 19th century, the restrictions of freedom of movement, common in the Tsarist Empire, had been gradually relaxed for non-Jewish subjects. Simultaneously, and in stark contrast, for Jews freedom of movement was drastically reduced, especially during the reigns of the last two Tsars, Alexander III (1881–1894) and Nicholas II (1894–1917).

emanated.[13] Not even the name of his mother is documented. But his *mameloishn,* his mother tongue, was Yiddish.[14]

As a *heder*-pupil, little Yehezkel would have begun to learn biblical and mishnaic Hebrew as well as Aramaic soon after he was able to walk. He appears to have been an *ilui*—a child prodigy in Torah studies—who from a very young age not only knew much of the Tanakh, Mishnah, Talmud etc. by heart, but who, in comparison with his peers, was well advanced in his understanding of many complexities of Torah. In the universe of Jewish learning that flourished in the *hadarim, yeshivot* and *bate midrash* of Eastern Europe before the Shoa, this phenomenon was not altogether exceptional. However, the other side of the coin becomes apparent in a few remarks by the septuagenarian Koifman on how *haredi* children had to create their own space for child's play, for which his father had no time. Koifman describes this lack of interest and understanding of child psychology as typical of his *haredi* milieu.[15]

On the other hand, Yehezkel's father would not permit the obstruction of his son's education by traditional *haredi* tenets, which tended to anathematize both Modern Hebrew and instruction in what was termed "secular" subjects. Rather, Mordechai Koifman accepted the advice that Yehezkel's potential would flourish best beyond the confines of the *heder.* With a private teacher, Fishke Kenigsberg, Yehezkel studied Modern Hebrew and Modern Hebrew literature with great enthusiasm, and learned to write essays.[16]

According to some generic remarks by Koifman, he acquired his secular education from private teachers. No doubt his secular education must also have benefited from his autodidactic talents. All this conforms with a pattern of education that had become very common in east European Jewry since the middle of the 19th century: as in previous generations boys would continue to have a traditional education in the *heder, yeshiva* and *bet midrash,* while also acquiring a secular education, either simultaneously or later on.

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13 Koifman had at least six siblings. Although Yehezkel's father, Mordechai Nachum Koifman, does not appear to have enjoyed much education himself, a good deal of evidence attests to his supporting Yehezkel's education in spite of chronic financial hardship and destitution: even in World War I, when his son was a university student in Bern, Mordechai repeated his offers of financial support, which his son refused. See Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 17–18.

14 Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 17.

15 Elhanai, "Yehezkel Kaufmann," 89.

16 Elhanai, "Yehezkel Kaufmann," 89.

2. Odessa and the Modern Yeshiva

Yehezkel Koifman's first geographic move was to Odessa. This port city on the northern coast of the Black Sea was home to a rich, vibrant, heterogeneous cultural life, benefiting from many contributions of expatriates, who hailed from a large variety of cultures, including from many Western European countries. Likewise, Odessa attracted many Jewish subjects of the Tsar, as it offered far better opportunities for economic and cultural development than any other location in the Pale of the Settlement. Consequently, the Jewish cultural scene in Odessa was broad and diverse: apart from a large contingent of Jews embracing Russian culture, there were many representatives of the Yiddish and Hebrew *Haskalah*[17].

Odessa was also one of the most important centers of the Jewish National Movement. It attracted many Hebrew authors, Hebrew publishing companies and literary journals. The Hibbat Zion Movement, linked to Aḥad Ha-ʿAm,[18] as well as several Zionist organizations were headquartered in the Black Sea port.

Throughout the 19th century, traditional anti-Semitism had been cultivated by the Tsarist regime and had been on the rise. When Koifman grew up, it was evident that Tsarist policies aimed to liquidate Russian Jewry. Jews were left with three alternatives. Many opted for emigration; however, this was merely a solution on an individual level. For the vast majority the choice was between assimilation and Jewish nationalism.[19]

In Odessa, the Jewish population had been the target of five pogroms in the 19th century.[20] The horrors of these events were eclipsed by the October Pogrom of 1905, when more than 400 Jews were murdered and 1600 properties owned by Jews were destroyed. Subsequently, the city's Jewish population of around 160,000 inhabitants decreased by approximately a third. Psychologically, the effect of the pogroms at Kishinev, some 200 km northwest of Odessa, was no less significant.[21] The Hebrew poet, Haim

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17 In Hebrew usage, the term *haskalah* ("enlightenment") tends to designate the Jewish Enlightenment, rather than its contemporary European counterpart, with which it shares its philosophical foundations. The beginning of the Jewish Enlightenment is associated with Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786).—In east European Jewry, the evolution of the *Haskalah* also thrived on contributions of *maskilim* (i.e. followers of the *haskalah),* who had little or no impact on the discourse in western Europe, for example Israel Zamosc-Segal (ca.1700–1772), Baruch Schick (1744–1808) and Menahem Mendel Lefin (1749–1826). Salomon Maimon (1754–1800), who published in German having moved to Germany, also impacted on the discourse in Western Europe, especially with and on Immanuel Kant (1724–1804).

18 Asher Zvi Hirsch Ginsberg's (1856–1927) pen name: Aḥad Ha-ʿAm (Hebrew: "one of the people," as in Genesis 26:10).

19 Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 22–24.

20 In 1821, 1859, 1871, 1881 and 1900.

21 In the first pogrom of 1903, 47 Jews were slain, 600 injured and over 1,000 properties of Jews were destroyed at Kishinev. In 1905, 19 Jews were slain and 56 injured.

Nachman Bialik (1873–1934), one of Koifman's teachers in Odessa, had gone to investigate the 1903 Kishinev Pogrom as a member of the Jewish Historical Commission in Odessa. The experience inspired his powerful poem, "In the City of Slaughter," borrowing stylistically on biblical lamentations.

At the beginning of 1907, when Yehezkel Koifman had just turned seventeen, he enrolled at the Modern Yeshiva in Odessa. At this point, the city had about 100,000 Jewish inhabitants and was still the second largest Jewish center in the Pale of the Settlement, superseded solely by Warsaw. Koifman's family had previously moved to Odessa, but it is not known when.[22] No reference by Koifman is on record regarding the October Pogrom that had been perpetrated some 15–16 months before he became a student at the Modern Yeshiva. Thus, whether the Koifmans witnessed any of those horrors, or whether they might even have been harmed by them is unknown. Be that as it may, in one or more ways Yehezkel must have been exposed to the traumatized atmosphere that would have prevailed among Jews in the aftermath of the recent Odessa and Kishinev pogroms.

Rav Haim Tchernowitz (1870–1949), nicknamed "HaRav HaZa'ir" (the Young Rabbi), was the founder and principal of the modern Yeshivah in Odessa—also known as the Great Yeshivah or simply as "The Yeshivah". It had opened its doors in 1906, that is, at most twelve months, before Koifman enrolled. In addition to Tchernowitz, the young Koifman experienced both Bialik and the historian Joseph Klausner (1874–1958) as stimulating teachers at the Yeshivah.

Hebrew was the language of instruction at Tchernowitz's yeshivah, and the ideas and agendas of the Jewish National Movement were central to its teaching. It soon became a mecca attracting many gifted young men of Koifman's generation from all corners of the Pale of the Settlement, where most *maskilim* were pinning their hopes on the Jewish National Movement.

The curriculum of the Yeshiva included both the gambit of traditional subjects—such as Talmud, Hebrew grammar, and Bible studies[23]—as well as secular subjects: e.g., secular history, Russian, geography, mathematics, natural sciences etc.

The Yeshiva was the birth place of the *haburah* or "the gang":[24] a group of less than a dozen likeminded students forming a fellowship among the larger student body, a phenomenon that was common in many parts of

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22 Elhanai, "Yehezkel Kaufmann," 89.

23 The historical critical approach to the Bible was new and highly controversial. Although it was taught at the Modern Yeshivah, there are indications that this gave rise to dramatic conflicts, which induced Koifman and like-minded friends to continue their education elsewhere. See Gutmann, 11–12.

24 On the *haburah* see Baruch Karo, "achad min hahaburah" ("One of the *haburah")*; Yom-Tov Hellman, *hagoth vedmuth, prakim basifruth ubahinuch* (*Thought and Image: On Literature and Education;* Jerusalem 1963), 16–18; Yehoshua Gutmann, "bereshit darko" ("At the Beginning of his Path"), 11–15.

Europe at the time. According to Baruch Karo, the *haburah* were the first group of young Jews who (1) were non-orthodox, (2) saw themselves as non-partisan and (3) were studying Jewish tradition *(hochmat yisrael)* out of scholarly interest and not as a means to an end.[25] The bonding of the *haburah* members lasted for four to five decades. Having grown up in the household of a *haburah* member, Batia Kopilevitz recalled the *haburah* members maintaining family like relations throughout their lives.[26] In her recollection they interacted and behaved like carefree twenty-year olds, when they would meet as middle-aged men. Apart from Koifman the names of five other members are documented: Yom Tov Hellman, Zvi Wislawski, Haim Aharon Krupnik, Baruch Krupnik and Yoshua Gutmann.[27] All of them emigrated to the *yishuv*[28] after living in Germany—with the exception of Yom Tov Hellman, who studied in Bern and went on to the USA, from where he emigrated to the *yishuv* in 1936. Throughout his life Koifman maintained his friendships with Hellman, Wisslawski and Gutmann—possibly also with the Krupniks.[29]

It appears that in the early days of the *haburah* in Odessa, its members did not see eye to eye with the "Talmudists," i.e., students from Lithuanian yeshivoth with comprehensive knowledge of the Talmud. Conceivably, these differences could have related to both the study of Tanakh per se and the application of historical-critical research methods to Torah. While researching the Tanakh was high on the agenda among followers of the Jewish National Movement, it might not have qualified as Torah study for other schools of thought, such as the "Talmudists".

Also, at that time many Jews tended to regard historical critical research of the Bible with unease and suspicion based on angst that evaluating the historical significance of the Scriptures, which had been held holy for the entire span of human memory, was prone to undermine traditional faith.[30] This scenario might correspond with Guttman's recollection of some fifty years post factum that Bible was only taught at the Yeshivah during the period when Bialik was there.[31]

By contrast Koifman recalled, likewise half a century post factum, that he had heard about the "new criticism of the Bible" in Klausner's lec-

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25 See Karo, "achad min hahaburah," 17.

26 My interview with Batia Kopilevitz, née Hellman (1922), and her husband, Emanuel Kopilevitz, on 28 June, 1995.

27 Karo, "achad min hahaburah"*;* interview with Kopilevitz, who owned a photograph of 1907, depicting Koifman and the named individuals.

28 The Yishuv is the community of Jews living in Palestine from the late 19th century until the founding of the State of Israel in 1948.

29 There is no documentations shedding light on his relations with Haim Aharon and Baruch Krupnik.

30 This phenomenon was also prevalent among contemporary Christians of all denominations.

31 Gutmann, "bereshit darko," 11.

tures.[32] There is no reason to doubt that both of these recollections are equally valid. More significantly, they both appear to relate to a controversy of serious consequence regarding the significance of the historical critical study of the Bible in the curriculum of the Yeshivah. Conceivably this might have been a decisive issue in the conflicts surrounding Klausner's dismissal in 1909.[33] In this situation the *haburah* took sides with Klausner, questioning Tchernowitz' authority.[34]

At the time, this is likely to have caused distance between Koifman and Tchernowitz. Considering the dramatic nature of the conflict, an observer might be inclined to imagine the estrangement between the student and his teacher as having been severe. However, none of this pre-empted Koifman and the principal of the Yeshivah from forging a friendship for life. Four years later Tchernowitz, a paternal figure for Koifman,[35] probably supported his move to the University of Bern.[36] And less than a decade later the two men were working in tandem on a successful publishing project that involved intensive co-operation for about six years.[37] All this appears to suggest that there may have been a substantial element of teenage rebellion to Koifman's earlier differences with Tchernowitz. In keeping with this paradigm, the conflict back in 1909 had been highly dramatic, escalating from the *haburah* boycotting exams to their exodus from the Yeshiva, embarking for distant shores beyond the Pale of the Settlement.

Bialik, who also taught at the Odessa Yeshiva, was another paternal figure in Koifman's life. Their mentee-mentor relationship is already documented in a letter of December 1909, when Koifman addressed his teacher Bialik in the most deferential terms. This relationship appears to have been established before Koifman had left the Odessa Yeshiva.[38] The letter also reflects Koifman's trust and respect for his mentor, which presumably would have been mutual. However, it is not known whether Bialik had already perceived Koifman's promise at that early stage. What we do know, however, is that a quarter of a century later, Bialik hailed and supported his talented former student as an exceptional asset to the Jewish intellectual life of his generation.[39]

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32 Elhanai, "Yehezkel Kaufmann" 89.

33 See Job Y. Jindo, "Recontextualizing Kaufmann: His Empirical Conception of the Bible and Its Significance in Jewish Intellectual History, *JJTP* 19.2 (2011): 95–129, p. 99, fn. 13.

34 See Gutmann, 11–12.

35 Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 27–28.

36 See below, pp. 24-26.

37 See Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 68ff.

38 See below, p. 15, fn. 69. In this letter Koifman addresses Bialik: "To my Sir and Rabbi H. N. Bialik."

39 On Bialik's passionate, albeit unsuccessful efforts to facilitate Koifman's appointment to the faculty of the Hebrew University see Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,*

In the context of Koifman's entire life, his relations with Klausner appear in a highly ambivalent light. Among their contemporaries, there is broad agreement that Klausner, who was appointed to the faculty of the Hebrew University Jerusalem in 1925, subsequently undermined Koifman's appointment for as long as he could. Evidently, the fallout must have taken place after April 1929, when Koifman still had unreserved confidance in his former teacher.[40] This conforms with Koifman's early student life in Eastern Europe, when he spoke very highly of Klausner, a dynamic young scholar in his early thirties, to whom Koifman looked up as a guide and teacher.[41] Looking back on his student days half a century later, Koifman recalled that Klausner had taught the "new criticism of the Bible" at the Yeshivah.[42] Apparently, this was Koifman's first encounter with historical critical research of the Bible.[43]

In his recollections, Koifman also recounted how Klausner had rejected a manuscript Koifman had submitted for publication in *Hashiloah* as a seventeen or eighteen-year-old student at the Yeshivah.[44] Per se this does not warrant to be interpreted as evidence of primordial antipathy or even jealousy on Klausner's part towards his gifted young student. The other side of the coin that needs to be factored into this situation is Koifman's obstinacy, which conceivably might have been exacerbated by teenage enthusiasm. For almost a decade later, the challenge that Koifman's obduracy and unwillingness to revise a manuscript could pose to an editor bent on facilitating productive interaction between his authors and readers is on record: in that instance Martin Buber, irenic by temperament, invested much effort to tone down Koifman's polemical diatribe—albeit in vain.[45]

It cannot be established to what extent Klausner's reasons for rejecting Koifman's manuscript may or may not have been well or poorly founded. However that may be, for Koifman's intellectual biography this text is highly significant, because he went on to submit part of that manuscript to *Heatid* in early 1913.[46] Inter alia, this text on prophetic literature documents that Koifman had already mastered and applied the methodology of histori-

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60; see also my introduction to "A Concise Summary of the work *Golah ve-nekhar* (Exile and Alienation)," pp. 269–272 in this volume.

40 As documented by Koifman's letter to Klausner of 24 April, 1929; see below at fn. 173.

41 See below, p. 15.

42 See above, p. 10.

43 Jindo, *JJTP* 19.2 (2011): 95–129, p. 99, fn. 13.

44 Elhanai, "Yehezkel Kaufmann," 90.

45 Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 51; see below, pp. 24-26.

46 Elhanai, "Yehezkel Kaufmann," 89. However, due to technical complications resulting from World War I and the post-war period, the manuscript Koifman had submitted in 1913 was only published twelve years later, in 1925 (see Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 45).

cal-critical research of the Bible, before he had ever crossed the threshold of a university in Western Europe.[47]

No less significant for Koifman's development as an intellectual was his encounter with Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's teachings, which appear to have dominated the discourse at the Yeshivah in Odessa.[48] This provoked Koifman's adamant opposition, which preoccupied the young intellectual, conceivably already before he had quit the Yeshivah. Assessing this phase of critical interaction with Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's teaching in the context of Koifman's entire intellectual biography, it appears that his preoccupation with Aḥad Ha-ʿAm served him well in the medium and long term: the young Koifman, still an unknown entity in the contemporary intellectual discourse, needed to develop a sound methodology, if he wished to stand a chance of being heard when contradicting the towering ideological giant of the Jewish National Movement in Eastern Europe. This challenge had a highly significant beneficial effect for Koifman, as it catalyzed the mapping out of his own position, the very foundation of his creative intellectual career. Back in his late teens and early twenties, the process of opposing an authority whom many followers of the Jewish National Movement revered as an icon eventually empowered the young intellectual to venture into new, unchartered waters.[49]

Koifman's first publication was his only literary creation, a short story in Hebrew, entitled "Sounds of the City" (1909). It describes the psychological crisis of Shmuel, a young man from a small *shtetl,* who ends up unemployed and destitute in an unnamed Russian city.[50] The protagonist's abject poverty is reminiscent of Koifman's own experience of material deprivation, which, like Torah, had accompanied him from a very young age. This only piece of published fiction by the young Koifman is not at all on a par with his essayistic and scholarly achievements, which he was also beginning to produce at that time. He never pursued his early literary ambitions.

Some time in the summer or early autumn of 1909—approximately two and a half years after Koifman's enrollment—he and the *haburah* discontinued their studies at the Yeshivah. Their departure appears to have occurred in a highly dramatic and conflicted situation involving rebellion against the Rav Za'ir. The circumstances of Klausner's dismissal in 1909 are not documented. This, however, triggered the exam boycott by the *haburah*, a decision their spokesman, Baruch Karo, was tasked to communicate to Tchernowitz.[51] In this context Gutmann recalled a general malcon-

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47 Yehezkel Kaufmann, "ha-nevuah ha-sifrutit" (in Hebrew, "Prophetic Literature"), *Heatid* 6 (1925–26): 45–62.

48 Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 27–28, 31–34.

49 Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 32–34; see below, pp. 18-20.

50 Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 30.

51 See Karo, 17.

tent among students of the Yeshiva, motivating many of them to quit and to head for the Academy of Jewish and Oriental Studies in St. Petersburg.[52]

3. The Academy of Jewish and Oriental Studies in St. Petersburg[53]

In all likelihood, Yehezkel Koifman had never set foot outside the Pale of the Settlement until he was almost 20 years of age. In the second half of 1909 he and the *haburah* left the Ukraine for St. Petersburg, to enroll at the Academy of Jewish and Oriental Studies, which had been sponsored and founded by Baron David Goratsiyevich Günzburg (1857–1910), who was still serving as its principal in 1909.[54]

Since the capital of the Tsarist Empire was located outside the Pale of the Settlement, every Jewish subject of the Tsar required a special residence permit for St. Petersburg. More often than not this proved an insurmountable obstacle. Nevertheless, the capital exercised a powerful attraction on many Jews. Although the Jewish population of St. Petersburg remained relatively small,[55] the city was one of the most important political and cultural centers for Russian Jewry.[56] Albeit often in a purely technical sense, advocating Jewish interests could only take place at the appropriate fora located in and around the Tsarist Court.[57]

Also, several important Jewish newspapers and journals preferred to be based in the capital in the hope of concluding reasonable agreements with the repressive censorship authorities. Under these circumstances obtaining residence permits for the students of Baron Günzburg's Academy of Jewish and Oriental Studies was routinely fraught with complications, which the

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52 See Gutmann, 11–12.

53 Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 35–40.

54 Zalman Shazar (1889–1974), half a century later, the third President of the State Israel (1963–1973), was a contemporary student of Koifman at the St. Petersburg Academy. After Koifman's death Shazar published a very vivid account of this institution and its founder: "Baron David Günzberg [*sic*] and his Academy," *The Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Volume of the Jewish Quarterly Review* (eds. Abraham A. Neuman and Solomon Zeitlin; Philadelphia: Jewish Quarterly Review, 1967), 1–17.

55 See Yehuda Slutsky, "Leningrad," *EJ* 11 (1971): 14–17. In 1887, the Jewish population of St. Petersburg numbered 17254, i.e. 1,4% of the capital's total population (Slutsky, "Leningrad," 15).

56 On St. Petersburg at the beginning of the 20th century consider the testimony of Simon Dubnow, *Mein Leben* (ed. Elias Hurwicz; Berlin: Jüdische Buchvereinigung, 1937), 178–89.

57 This option rarely went beyond the influence of the Barons Günzburg (see Simha Katz, "Guenzburg," *EJ* 7 (1971): 960–63): e.g., the failed attempt of Baron Horaz Günzburg (1833–1909) to persuade Tsar Alexander III in 1881, to halt the pogroms that were being encouraged by the authorities, see Simon Dubnow, *Weltgeschichte des jüdischen Volkes. Von seinen Uranfängen bis zur Gegenwart, I–X* (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag 1925–1929, 131–32; Salo W. Baron, *The Russian Jew under Tsars and Soviets* (2nd ed., New York: Macmillan, 1976), 45–46.

Baron's administrator had to address, often bribing the police and other officials.[58]

Baron David Günzburg had founded the Academy of Jewish and Oriental Studies in 1907. Educated in Russia, Paris and Greifswald, this erudite and polyglot savant of phenomenal cultural and intellectual scope[59] shared the vision of combining the spirituality of east European Jewish tradition with the historical critical methodology of the west European *Wissenschaft des Judentums*.[60] This agenda determined the curriculum of the St. Petersburg Academy of Jewish and Oriental Studies, where a faculty with some of the finest Russian scholars of Jewish and Oriental studies taught a broad range of relevant disciplines:[61] all periods of Jewish history from biblical ages to modern times; apocryphal and pseudapocryphal literature; Mishnah; Talmud; Midrash; philology; oriental studies; medieval biblical exegesis and literature; and legal history as well as Jewish social and economic history. These historical disciplines were taught applying the critical methodology of contemporary west European scholarship.[62]

The language of instruction at the Academy of Jewish and Oriental Studies was Russian. Its faculty included Baron Günzburg and the historian Simon Dubnow (1860-1941), both of whom Shazar describes as stimulating and highly charismatic teachers.[63] Isaac Dov Ber Markon (1875-1949) worked for Günzburg on research projects for many years and also taught at the *Academy* in 1908-1911.[64] Judah Leib Benjamin Katzenelson (1846-1917) already taught at the Academy before heading it after Günzburg's death in December 1910.[65]

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58 Shazar, "Baron David Günzberg and his Academy," 4.

59 Katz, 962: "He [= Günzburg] specialized in oriental subjects and linguistics, and medieval Arabic poetry, in the universities of St. Petersburg, Greifswald… and in Paris, … David gained a knowledge of most Semitic languages …" He published in Russian, French, Hebrew and German (Katz, 962–63). Consider also Shazar, "Baron David Günzberg and his Academy," 11: "A uniquely interesting world opened before us when he (sc: Baron David Günzburg) lectured on Hebrew philology. Equipped with extraordinary knowledge, he seemed to swim through seas of lexicography. He was said to master thirty-six languages and all the intricacies of their respective grammars."

60 Shazar, "Baron David Günzberg and his Academy," 1: "Very few and very distinguished were those Russian Jews who were spiritually rooted in eastern Europe but open to the West, aspiring to graft western scientific method upon the profound traditional learning of eastern Jewry. This synthesis, they felt, would be the salvation of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* itself, as well as a blessing to the development of Russian Jewry."

61 Shazar, "Baron David Günzberg and his Academy," 2ff.

62 Shazar ("Baron David Günzberg and his Academy," 7–8) notes, that only much later—namely, attending seminars of Friedrich Meinecke in Freiburg and Eduard Meier in Berlin—did he realize, how thoroughly he had already acquired critical historical methodology in Simon Dubnow's seminars in St. Petersburg.

63 Zalman Shazar, "Yehezkel Koifman ve-poalo" (in Hebrew, "Yehezkel Koifman and his Work"), *Hadoar* 43 (1963): 59–61, 59.

64 Shazar, "Baron David Günzberg and his Academy," 9.

65 Yehuda Slutsky, "Katzenelson, Judah Leib Benjamin," *EJ* 10 (1972): 832–33.

In all likelihood, Koifman would already have been proficient in Russian, when he enrolled at the Academy. At the beginning of the 20th century many Odessa Jews were steeped in Russian culture. Given Koifman's intellectual talents and curiosity he had probably mastered Ukrainian with its close linguistic affinity to Russian from an early age, long before he had come to Odessa as a teenager.

The faculty members and the students of the St. Petersburg Academy of Jewish and Oriental Studies had the benefit of a remarkable Judaica library in Baron Günzburg's possession.[66] His private library was the venue of the seminars and classes during the initial phase of the Academy.[67] Whether this was still the case when Koifman attended the Academy cannot be established. Conceivably, his reference to *"tohu wa-bohu"*[68] at the Academy might also refer to such technical issues. More significantly, in the gloomy letter he sent to Bialik from St. Petersburg in early January 1910, Koifman described the *haburah* as having "gone from Odessa into Exile, to the place of the star worshippers."[69] This text also documents the discontent and disappointment the *haburah* experienced at the St. Petersburg Academy.

Although Koifman acknowledged the high caliber of many of the teachers at the St. Petersburg Academy, he was not sure whether it is on a par with the Modern Yeshivah in Odessa. His conviction that Klausner's input would greatly enhance the quality of the Academy and might even ensure that it would realize its full potential, is testimony to both the high esteem, in which the young Koifman held Klausner, and to the charisma the latter exercised on the *haburah.* This letter also provides an insight into the dire poverty of the *haburah:* being strangers and not knowing anyone in St. Petersburg, their economic situation "is without basis, if not less than that". Koifman was convinced that, were this to happen, Klausner's arriving in St. Petersburg would end their destituteness. As this appears to be unlikely, Koifman reminds Bialik of a translation-publication project, on which he and his friends of the *haburah* were pinning hopes of a modest income in return for translations from several languages.[70]

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66 Katz, 963: "His [= Günzburg's] library, which had one of the most important collections of Judaica, was one of the largest in private ownership in the world, and contained a valuable collection of manuscripts and books, including incunabula (presently in the Lenin State Library in Moscow)." See also I. Markon, "Baron David Günzburg," *EJ(D)* 7(1931): 726–27.

67 Shazar, "Baron David Günzberg and his Academy," 10.

68 *Sic*, in inverted commas (Hebrew for "primordial chaos").

69 Letter by Yehezkel Koifman to Haim Nachman Bialik of 25 December, 1909 (i.e., 7 January, 1910 according to the Gregorian Calendar); Bialik House Archives, 22 Bialik Street, Tel Aviv, 63324.

70 In this context the natural nonchalance, with which Koifman refers to Yiddish as "the Jargon," is noteworthy. According to the obsession he appears to have shared with other east European Jewish nationalists it was a given, that Hebrew was the only language a self-respecting Jew could cultivate—arrogance that translated to obliviousness to the serious implications of this hateful attitude to Yiddish and those, whose cultural and per-

Probably most, if not all the members of the *haburah* had relocated from *shtetl* communities in the Pale of the Settlement, or possibly from Odessa, to the capital of the Tsarist Empire. No doubt this involved considerable psychological challenges. Thus it does not appear entirely impossible that the initial abject mood and reserved attitude of the *haburah* towards the St. Petersburg Academy documented in Koifman's epistle to Bialik may have changed over time. In any event, in 1958, conceivably in commemoration of Günzburg's 100th birthday (1857), Koifman dedicated a study, "In Remembrance of my Teacher and Rabbi, Baron David Günzburg."[71] Considering that Günzburg fell seriously ill in the autumn of 1910 and died soon afterwards, on 22 December, 1910, it appears that Koifman would have had the opportunity of meeting and appreciating the savant for approximately a year.

Koifman studied at the Academy in St. Petersburg for just over three years, until some time in the first half of 1913. His co-student Zalman Shazar perceived him as "taciturn" and "focused."[72] Circumstantial evidence appears to indicate that this phase was no less formative for Koifman's personal and intellectual development than the preceding two and a half years at the Yeshiva in Odessa.

At both institutions, students were taught to appreciate and apply historical critical methodology, as Koifman did throughout his life as a man of letters. However, the ideological and intellectual atmosphere prevailing at the Odessa Yeshiva and the St. Petersburg Academy appears to have been characteristically distinct from each other: since Tchernowitz was an ardent disciple of Aḥad Ha-ʿAm,[73] much, if not the entirety, of the agenda espoused at the Young Rabbi's Modern Yeshiva, appears to have been molded by the intellectual influence of Aḥad Ha-ʿAm and his vision for the Jewish National Movement.[74] By contrast, in the intellectual climate of the St. Petersburg Academy, the focus of attention was not primarily on the agenda of the Jewish National Movement. Since the latter had many followers in Russian Jewry, it was only natural that many of its prominent advocates were among the numerous guest lecturers invited to the Academy.[75]

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sonal identity was steeped in it. This becomes an issue in one of Koifman's early disputes, see below, pp. 24-26.

71 Yehezkel Kaufmann, "ʿare ha-leviim" (in Hebrew; "The Levitical Cities"), *He-ʿavar* 6 (1958): 121–27.

72 Shazar, "Yehezkel Koifman and his Work," 59.

73 Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 27–32.

74 For a vivid description of Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's irresistable impact on east European Jewry, cosnider Chaim Weizmann's account, which concludes: "He [= Aḥad Ha-ʿAm] was, I might say, to Jews, what Gandhi has been to many Indians, what Mazzini was to Young Italy a century ago" (Weizmann, *Trial and Error: The Autobiography of Chaim Weizmann* [London: Hamilton, 1949], 53–54.)

75 Hayyim Nahman Bialik (1873–1934), Joseph Klausner (1874–1958), Joseph Trumpeldor (1880–1920) et al.

However, Dubnow's thought and teaching, a stark contrast to the *Weltanschauung* of the Jewish National Movement, was an impressive, if not imposing intellectual influence at the Academy.[76] It stands to reason that the vantage point from the St. Petersburg Academy furnished Koifman with the liberating geographic and intellectual distance he required from "Aḥad Ha-ʿAm country" in Odessa and beyond. In any event, it was in St. Petersburg that Koifman developed his critical assessment of Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's contribution to the Jewish National Movement, which was crucial for his own intellectual development.[77] At the time, Koifman's position was disconcertingly iconoclastic and subversive for many followers of Aḥad Ha-ʿAm.[78]

4. Yehezkel Koifman's Formative Years and Early Work

In the first half of 1913, Koifman left the Academy of Jewish and Oriental Studies in St. Petersburg. Before moving on to Switzerland at the end of the year, he spent the summer at Nicolayev in Podolia, where Haiim Baron hired him as a private teacher for his children. According to Chaya Hellman, née Baron, her father almost dismissed Koifman because of heated disagreement on Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's teaching. However, Koifman made no concessions to his employer, who experienced the dissent of his children's teacher with the authoritative doyen of the Jewish National Movement to be unacceptable.[79]

Haiim Baron had three children: Chaya (born in 1893), and her younger siblings Feigele (Zipora) and Salman. Koifman's friend, Yom-Tov Hellman (born in 1890), also served as their teacher, although it is not clear whether Baron hired these two members of the *haburah* simultaneously. However, his initiative to employ teachers for his children eventually evolved into a small Zionist school for children and teenagers at Nicolayev.[80]

It appears that from his young adulthood onwards Koifman felt a strong attraction to Chaya Baron, who did not discourage him from courting her, while she was evidently also fond of Yom-Tov Hellman.[81] These triangular

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76 Shazar, "Yehezkel Koifman Kaufmann and his Work," 59–60.

77 See above, p. 12.

78 See in the following section, Koifman's dissent with Haiim Baron.

79 See Yehezkel Kaufmann, *Christianity and Judaism: Two Covenants* (trans. C. W. Efroymson; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988), ix, n. 5.

80 Interview, Batia Kopilevitz, see above, p. 9.

81 On the many geographic moves throughout his life, Koifman kept a photograph with the portrait of a beautiful young woman of about twenty years of age. The Hebrew dedication on the back of it reads: "20.1.1914—Don't forget me!—Heike.—As a souvenir for Koifman." A note attached to this photograph carries the following message: "Koifman! I have just received this picture as a test print, and I want to send it to you right away today. But don't show it to Hellman, until I receive the other pictures, and then I will send

dynamics persisted for some forty years. According to Chaya's daughter, Batia, the love of her mother's life had been Batia's father, Yom-Tov Hellman, whom Chaya married as a young woman. Subsequently, a triangular friendship bonded the Hellman couple and Koifman for the rest of their lives.[82]

Koifman was just under 24 years of age, when he left Eastern Europe, never to return. Henceforth, Western Europe, and later both the *yishuv* in Palestine and the young State of Israel, became the geographic context and cultural ambience, where he created his phenomenal life work. Its intellectual parameters had, however, already taken shape, before he set foot in a west European university. This is evidenced by two publications, the manuscripts of which he had authored before leaving Eastern Europe: his thorough critique of Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's thought and methodology[83] as well as a study on the prophets.[84]. The author of the latter study already masters the historical-critical methodology, which he then went on to use in his future work that included the most prolific and important contribution by a Jewish savant to 20th century Bible scholarship. Moreover, in these two early publications significant structural elements of Koifman's thought are already discernible.

Koifman's discussion of Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's work covers an extensive range of historical issues.[85] However, Koifman's critique focuses on philosophical methodology, while also rejecting Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's philosophical tradition. On this backdrop, the basic features of Koifman's own philosophical system take shape. His critique of Aḥad Ha-ʿAm is based on the perception that metaphysics is a given, and as such is fundamental to the history of biblical religion throughout its history, from its early beginnings to its latest periods—this being a fundamental, perennial characteristic of Judaism. This notion is central to Koifman's concept of monotheism, which he developed in great detail during the following twenty-five years. By the time Koifman's concept of monotheism evolved in his *Toledot ha-emunah ha-yisre'elit* (A History of the Israelite Faith, 1937–1956, henceforth *Tole-*

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him a picture as well. Apart from that he is so jealous! Why? I can't write much now, because I am very busy. Heike. When you get the picture, answer me straight away." My translation from Hebrew, *Yehezkel Kaufmann Archive* of the Jewish National Library in Jerusalem no 6 (cited in the following as "*Kaufmann Archive,* no. …").

82 On the triangular friendship see below, pp. 34-35.

83 Yehezkel Koifman, "'yahaduto' shel Aḥad Ha-ʿAm" ("'The Judaism' of Aḥad Ha-ʿAm"), *Hashiloah* 30 (1913–14): 249–71. See above, p. 12. It is worth noting that Koifman's devastating critique of Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's work was published in the latter's Festschrift.

84 See above, pp. 11-12; on the circumstances that delayed the publication of this manuscript for twelve years until 1925, although Koifman had already submitted its final version to the editor in 1913, see Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 45, 117.

85 For the following, see Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 33f, 41–43, 83–91.

dot) in the 1930s and 1940s,[86] he described the characteristics of monotheism by means of phenomenological comparison with polytheistic religions. Methodologically this involves defining the morphology and the characteristics of biblical monotheism by means of deduction.[87] In both of Koifman's opera magna this resulted in his tendency to present biblical religion as a quasi-closed philosophical system.[88]

Apart from taking issue with Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's blind spot that resulted in his ignoring the central significance of religion in Israel's history and culture, Koifman rejected Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's evolutionist notion of human history. In Koifman's view, changes in human history are not brought about through gradual development, but result from revolutions in religious and intellectual history. In Koifman's later work, this supposition leads on to his idea of the "monotheistic revolution" that he conceived of being at the inception of biblical monotheism.

Another dimension of Koifman's rejection of Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's evolutionist approach relates to the necessity of making clear and clean conceptual distinctions with regard to the phenomenology of re-definitions of values that occur in the history of religions. Genuine evolution, i.e., the creation of new religious traditions, needs to be distinguished from their reinterpretation by later generations.

In conclusion, in this critique of Aḥad Ha-ʿAm the outline of the fundamental characteristics of Koifman's scholarly life work are already apparent: in methodological terms his predilection for a closed system is evident, which became a hallmark of his conception of both monotheism and of biblical religion. Also, in substantive terms three characteristics are conspicuous: first, the centrality of the metaphysical experience in biblical religion; second, strong reservations vis-à-vis evolutionist thinking;[89] and

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86 Yehezkel Kaufmann, *History of Israelite Religion: From its Beginnings to the End of the Second Temple* (in Hebrew; 4 vols.; Jerusalem: Bialik institute, 1937–56). Ending with late prophecy, this *monumental* opus magnum was never completed, as it does not cover the late post-exilic period and the inception of Christianity, as the author had initially intended.

87 See Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 81–88; Thomas Krapf, *Die Priesterschrift und die vorexilische Zeit: Yehezkel Kaufmanns vernachlässigter Beitrag zur Geschichte der biblischen Religion* (OBO 119; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag and Göttingen: Vandenhock & Ruprecht, 1992), 71–209.

88 See Yehezkel Kaufmann, *Golah ve-nekhar* (Exile and Alienation) (in Hebrew; 2 vols.; Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1929–30), 1:257–83; Kaufmann, *Toledot*, 1:221–737; Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel: From its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile* (trans. Moshe Greenberg: Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), 7–149.—On Koifman's closed systems, see Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg* 83–88, 96–100.

89 However, Koifman's rejection of evolutionst interpretations of the history of biblical religion, as expounded in *Toledot*, ultimately remains somewhat theoretical, as his own historiography also features evolutionist structures; see Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 101–5.

third, the significance of intellectual creativity as a decisive factor for the course of human history.

The second publication that Koifman had authored before leaving Eastern Europe, is a study of prophetic literature.[90] Inter alia this study provides ample evidence that its author mastered the methodology of historical-critical Bible research. Apart from that, this first contribution by Koifman to the history of biblical religion reveals many essential characteristics of his later work very clearly. Thus he rejects the notion of the Wellhausen school, who hold monotheism to be a creation of classical prophecy. In Koifman's view the prophets were not founders of a religion, but teachers preaching to their co-religionists, thus admonishing a target audience familiar with the religious traditions, on which the values were based and which the prophets were endeavoring to revive and to re-enforce. Hence, the supposed historical precedence of the prophets before the priesthood, as postulated by the Wellhausen school, had no basis whatsoever.[91]

5. Re-locating to Western Europe

At the beginning of the 20th century the Jewish inhabitants of the Pale of the Settlement were facing a bleak future. Many of them headed for the western part of the continent and across the Atlantic. At east European universities, discriminatory admission impediments for Jews seeking higher education were achieving their goal on a large scale: young Jewish intellectuals joined the exodus in droves. Universities in Berlin, Bern and Paris were among their most attractive destinations.

At the end of 1913, Yehezkel Koifman settled in Zurich for several months, presumably in preparation of his move to the University of Bern in the following spring.[92] Throughout the next 15 years, Koifman re-invented himself, making great efforts to avoid stigmatization as an "Ostjude," i.e., a Jew from Eastern Europe. According to widespread prejudice prevalent among non-Jews and Jews alike in the western half of the continent, Jews hailing from Eastern Europe were stereotyped as backward, uncouth, uncul-

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90 See above, pp. 11-12.

91 In his later *Toledot,* Koifman took issue with both Wellhausen's Hegellian evolutionist perception per se and its resulting Christian replacement theology in the scholarship of Wellhausen and his disciples. In this early study on prophetic literature in the Bible, Koifman merely refers to Wellhausen's Christian replacement theology in passing. On the impact this theological doctrine can have on the historical interpretation of the Priestly Code in biblical religion consider, Krapf, *Priesterschrift*, 3–66 et al.; specifically on Wellhausen's ideology, see Moshe Weinfeld, *Getting at the Roots of Wellhausen's Understanding of the Law of Israel: On the 100th Anniversary of the Prolegomena* (Jerusalem: The Institute for Advanced Studies, 1979); Weinfeld, *The Place of Law in the Religion of Ancient Israel* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), chaps. 1–4.

92 See Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 47.

tivated, uneducated, unsophisticated, unhygienic, etc. On this backdrop, Koifman was anxious to liberate himself from the stigma of the *yeshiva bocher* (yeshiva student) and instead, to come across as a west European *university student.*[93]

Having arrived in Switzerland, Koifman adopted "Kaufmann" as the transcription in Latin letters of his family name, thus altering the phonetics of the Hebrew and Yiddish "Koifman" with its unmistakably east European ring. For his first name, he soon settled for the German transcription, "Jesekiel."[94] For the next decade and a half that he spent in Western Europe, he authenticated all his publications in German with "Jesekiel Kaufmann."[95] They proffer substantive contributions to a range of disciplines. In the landscape of scholarly publications in German, Kaufmann's stylistic hallmark is conspicuous for the remarkable clarity of his texts, resulting from the author's precise formulations and, more importantly, from his predilection for short syntactical structures.[96]

During the decade and a half of his transit through Western Europe, K. presumably pronounced his family name "Kaufmann" instead of "Koifman." The high esteem in which he held German culture and customs is conceivably related to his aim of establishing distance between himself and his geographic and Yiddish cultural origins.[97] For Koifman's generation, this paradigm was not uncommon: thus in World War I Jews in Eastern Europe would often hail German soldiers as harbingers of civilization and as saviors from their draconic oppressors and uncultivated, aggressive neighbors, who had been making life unbearable for Jews over many generations. With the benefit of hindsight, the absurdity of the historic irony of this paradigm is apparent.

However, with regard to Koifman's biography the *Zeitgeist* in his social and cultural milieu goes a long way to explain his predilection for Germany and its culture. At a later stage in his life, when he had already been living in the *yishuv* for over a decade, he continued to cultivate German habits,

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93 In 1915, his friend and mentor, Rav Chaim Tchernowitz the former principal of the Odessa Modern Yeshivah, advised him to do so; see Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 53f.; see below, p. 27.

94 Initially, the forms "Chazkel", "Chaskel", "Hazkel", "Haskel" and "Jecheskel" are documented. On Kaufmann's efforts to obscure his east European origins, see Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 47, 56–59.

95 With the exception of his first two articles in German, Kaufmann produced all his German manuscripts without requiring translations from Hebrew (see below, pp. 24-25, fn. 111).

96 Kaufmann's first two articles were essays. In addition to this his scholarly bibliography in German comprises his PhD thesis (see below, p. 24, fn. 109), another study in philosophy (see Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 143), fifteen entries (1928–1930) in the German *Encyclopaedia Judaica (EJ[D])* on ancient and medieval Judaism (see below, p. 38, fn. 168) as well as four papers in biblical studies (see below, pp. 38-39, fn. 167,176).

97 Attested by several contemporaries, e.g., Batia Kopilevitz, see above, p.9, fn. 26.

which often tended to come across as quaint and unimaginably anachronistic in the local Middle Eastern context: e.g., his calculable punctuality and his habit of not only taking a daily walk to keep healthy, but making sure to do so at the same hour every day, come what may.[98] In 1942, when the entire *yishuv* were glued to their radio sets during the fateful Battles of El Alamein*,* Koifman persisted to go out every day at his fixed hour with his walking stick and hat. Doing so he enjoyed teasing Yom-Tov Hellman and other friends as "disorganized Russian Jews."[99] On the face of it, this comportment is reminiscent of the aloofness of some intellectuals at the time.[100] However, in Koifman's case, it cannot be ruled out that he was dissimulating his genuine mood. In fact, there appears to be a high likelihood that Koifman very much shared the widespread pre-occupation with the menacing German military advance and its dreaded devastating consequences for the Jewish population in the *yishuv.* Admittedly this comportment would have been extremely paradoxical. Nevertheless, Koifman's refusal to allow the military, political and historical drama unfolding on his very doorstep to disrupt his daily routine could have been no more than a psychological coping mechanism. For he was exceptionally well equipped to understand the significance of the Third Reich extending its tentacles to the *yishuv.* As far back as 1933, Koifman had been acutely aware of the uncontainable vicious forces behind the murderous fanaticism of Nazi racism and its purpose to wipe the Jewish people off the face of the earth: i.e., at a very early stage, when many Jews and most non-Jewish contemporaries had been failing to grasp the threat emanating from Nazi Germany.[101]

Moreover, Koifman's idiosyncratic demeanor during the Battles of El Alamain might indeed be related to an unexplained but conspicuous phenomenon in his biography. Some of his contemporaries observed that he kept altogether silent on the Shoa: he never made any comment on it, nei-

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98 *Ibid.*—The details of this idiosyncracy are indeed remarkably reminiscent of the ritual of Immanuel Kant's habit of taking a daily walk, allowing the town folk of Königsberg to set their clocks relying on the savant's quirky, but unfailing punctuality…

99 *Ibid.*

100 Yohanan Meroz (1920–2006), a distinguished Israeli diplomat, was involved in military and polical affairs of the *yishuv* during World War II. In his view, many faculty members and students of the Hebrew University tended to adopt isolationist disinterst vis-à-vis the German threat during the Battles of El Alamein, while only a minority of them volunteered for the Jewish Brigade (my interview with the late Yohanan Meroz on 29 December, 1996).

101 Yehezkel Koifman, "ha-mapeha ha-antishemit be-Germania," ("The anti-Semitic Revolution in Germany"), *Moznaim* 1 (1933): 1–18. This essay documents an astute analysis of German Fascism, its historical roots, its social context and the psychological forces driving it. According to Koifman's 1933 assessment, the Nazis had forced their agenda on Germany and its society, the objective being persecuting the Jews in order to disappear them. This was already having catastrophic consequences for Jews of all walks of life in Germany. At that point, the extent to which the Nazis would be able to implement their master plan for humanity remained the great unknown quantity.

ther while it was being perpetrated, nor after its unimaginable proportions had become known.[102]

Apart from admiration of proverbial German punctuality, the psychological significance of Koifman's pedantry illustrated by the anecdote about his daily walk under any circumstances might also be connected to his socio-cultural roots and to the importance of the structured daily routine prevalent in *haredi* Jewry. For his intellectual biography, it is no less significant that his *haredi* background might have endowed him with a particular sensitivity to the pertinence of spiritual issues in the unfolding of religious history.

For Koifman, the juxtaposition of the spiritual wealth of east European Jewish experience with modern west European scholarship might have been conflictual at times. As an *ilui*, he was steeped in the immense wealth of Jewish tradition he had learnt to cherish from his early childhood as a *haredi* Torah student. However, being a rationalist by temperament, he was likely to experience his background as oppressive, if not claustrophobic. The *psychological* challenges of this situation need to be born in mind regarding the aggressiveness, with which he degraded and belittled his Yiddish mother tongue. As discussed, it is difficult to avoid dissociating this weakness from some degree of self-hatred targeting not his east European background per se, but specifically its cultural expressions that used Yiddish as its vehicle.[103]

While the stages of Koifman's distancing himself from his socio-cultural roots are not documented in detail, the result of this process is abundantly evident in his biography; for his intellectual potential finds its self-expression in the paradigms of post-Renaissance rationalism and its methodologies of modern scholarship. And yet, beyond Koifman's passionate sobriety and rationalism of a western scholar there is another dimension, that appears to connect to the spiritual and cultural wealth of the world, which in a subconscious and complex dialectical way he had to leave behind, in order to develop his full creative and intellectual potential.

As a historical-critical scholar, Koifman displayed profound sensitivity to central issues in the history of Israelite religion. What he found to be unexplainable regarding important questions, he could accept as unfathomable without insisting that rationalist explanations were indispensable.[104] His notion of revelation is a case in point: at a certain juncture in the history of ancient Israel we encounter a groundbreaking event, which we are unable to illuminate, but can only establish as a historical fact of far reaching consequence; all we learn from biblical tradition is that a monotheistic revolution had taken place at a certain time, i.e., in the Mosaic age. Although

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[102] E.g. Lazarus-Yaffé, see below, p. 34, fn. 156; Haran, see below, p. 41, fn. 189.
[103] See below, pp. 24-26.
[104] Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 92–95.

there is no telling how this monumental game changer had come about or how it occurred, we cannot ignore its pivotal historic significance.[105]

6. The University of Bern[106]

On 5 May, 1914, Koifman enrolled at the University of Bern together with his friend Yom-Tov Hellman. The entry in the university record reads: "Hazkel Koifmann (Jecheskel Kaufmann)."[107] Their arrival in Bern might have been influenced and facilitated by Tchernowitz.[108]

Jewish intellectuals from Eastern Europe had ample reason to perceive a PhD from a west European university as an indispensable entrée to academia in that part of the continent. In March 1918, Jesekiel Kaufmann graduated as a PhD in philosophy with a study on sufficient reason in Immanuel Kant's philosophy.[109] The thesis was supervised by Richard Herbertz.[110]

During his PhD studies on logic, Kaufmann remained pre-occupied with matters of existential significance to the Jewish National Movement. In 1916–1917, he published two important texts on the significance of the re-emergence of Hebrew as a living language and as a unique and indispensable vehicle for Jewish cultural expression.[111] The tone of both of these con-

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[105] Given its context in contemporary New Testament scholarship, another striking example of Koifman's non-*rationalist* susceptibility of a spiritual dimenension in the history of religion appears to be his understanding of Jesus of Nazareth proclaiming himself to be the Messiah. Koifman had no difficulty contextualizing this as altogether natural in Hellenistic Judaism, at a time when great discussions were under way (Martin Kähler, Rudolph Bultmann et al.) on the fundamental difference between the historical Jesus and the proclaimed Jesus in early Christian tradition, and on the differing significance of these two entities regarding the Messianic quality of Jesus, see Kaufmann, *Christianity and Judaism,* 71ff.

[106] On Kaufmann's years in Bern see Thomas Staubli, "Yehezkel Kaufmann: The Bern Years of a Genius," pp. 45–59 in this volume, and Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 47–55.

[107] Tracing Koifman's life in western Europe, his name will be transcribed "Kaufmann" in the following.

[108] See Staubli, "Yehezkel Kaufmann: The Bern Years of a Genius," (p. 46 in this volume).

[109] For a discussion of Jesekiel Kaufmann's less-than-60-pages-long PhD thesis, *Eine Abhandlung über den zureichenden Grund, 1. Teil: Der logische Grund* (Berlin: Emil Ebering, 1920); see Staubli, "Yehezkel Kaufmann: The Bern Years of a Genius," pp. 51–53 in this volume.

[110] On Herbertz and Kaufmann's relations to him, see Staubli, "Yehezkel Kaufmann: The Bern Years of a Genius," p. 50 in this volume; Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 52.

[111] "Unsere 'Friedensstifter'," *Juedische Rundschau* 19 (12.5.1916): 151–52. This newspaper article was followed by a long essay: "Die hebräische Sprache und unsere nationale Zukunft," *Der Jude* 1 (1916–17): 407–18. For a summary of Kaufmann's argument see Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 49–50. Kaufmann authored the manuscripts of these first two German publications in Hebrew and had them translated. Sub-

tributions is extremely polemical, which per se was by no means unusual in the heated debate of the "Sprachenstreit" (Language Dispute), that was giving rise to violent clashes in the *yishuv* in those years.

With regard to Kaufmann's personal context, the intolerant rejection of Yiddish he displays was common among contemporary east European Jewish nationalists including Aḥad Ha-ʿAm.[112] This context might go some way to account for Kaufmann's unforgiving stance. And yet his embittered self-expression might border on self-hatred.[113] Conceivably, his inability to acknowledge any positive quality of the rich culture of his *Yiddish mameloishn* (mother tongue) could be connected to the strong urge he felt to distance himself from the elephant in the room: his east European origins, specifically his *Yiddish stetl* roots that he shared with many "Ostjuden," including *those,* of whom he might have felt ashamed, fearing they were giving rise to discriminatory stereotypes against *all* Jews hailing from Eastern Europe.

Regardless of these psychological aspects, the issues Kaufmann addresses in his first two publications in German are highly significant, and his well-made case can certainly not be dismissed out of hand: since Hebrew was the only common idiom enabling Jewish literary and intellectual creativity that could be accessible to *all* Jews, the successful revival of Hebrew was indispensable for the survival of the Jewish people as a distinct ethnic entity with its own cultural identity.[114]

Kaufmann's characteristically aggressive tone of argument was an issue throughout his work. Indeed, Moshe Greenberg's reference to Kaufmann's "typically scholastic style of free-swinging polemic"[115] comes across as a respectful understatement circumscribing the destructive vitriol that is a common feature of much of his writing.

As the editor of *Der Jude*, Martin Buber took issue with Kaufmann's aggressiveness and arrogance.[116] However, in the end the irenic editor's patient efforts to persuade the young, gifted author with underdeveloped social skills to temper the tone of his argument failed because of Kaufmann's stubbornness.[117] Initially, Buber had rejected both Kaufmann's reference to "the Jargon (i.e. Yiddish) satisfying the more base intellectual

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sequently, he wrote his German manuscripts without having to resort to translations from Hebrew.

112 For Kaufman his relentless, pejorative labelling of Yiddish as "the Jargon" appears to connect to how he definines his identity, see above, pp. 15-16, fn. 70.

113 See above, pp. 21-23.

114 For a study of Koifman's perception of the crucial role of the Hebrew language in Jewish history, see below, p. 30, fn. 139.

115 Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Biblical Account of the Conquest of Canaan* (a preface by Moshe Greenberg; trans. M. Dagut; 2nd ed.; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1985), 11.

116 See above, p. 11.

117 See Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 51.

needs"[118] and Kaufmann's consistent designations of Yiddish as "the Jargon" and of Yiddish speakers as "Jargonists." As far as the militant author's attitude was concerned, in Kaufmann's milieu of Hebrew speaking Jewish nationalists from Eastern Europe demeaning Yiddish as "Jargon" and its speakers as "Jargonists" was altogether acceptable, if not politically correct; the chauvinistic designation of Yiddish as "vulgar" and "women's speech" came naturally to Kaufmann, who was not afflicted by qualms of any kind.

In the end Buber's patient efforts to persuade Kaufmann to revise his offensive nomenclature were of no consequence. Having issued warnings to the author that his essay would not be published at all—in spite of being well argued in methodological terms—Buber did not make good on his threat; possibly because he never received promised alternative contributions on the important language issue by two authors, who failed to deliver.[119] In the end Kaufmann's authentic manuscript went to press, unscarred even by Buber's initial minimal condition, that the offensive "Jargon"-terminology must be edited away.

After his graduation in Bern, Kaufmann lived at Lausanne from the summer of 1918 for approximately one year, working with Tchernowitz preparing an abridged Talmud edition, a publication project, on which Kaufmann went on to work for some six years, even after he moved to Berlin in 1920.[120]

7. Berlin[121]

Jesekiel Kaufmann's Berlin years were an extremely productive period in his life. During the nine years from early 1920 until his emigration to the *yishuv* in the autumn of 1928 Yehezkel Koifman laid the foundations of his life work: he ultimately published it in Hebrew, having had to give up his initial plans in the 1930s of publishing his Bible scholarship in German—in addition to Hebrew.[122]

During his Berlin years, Kaufmann made a presumably very modest living as a free-lance scholar. He continued to collaborate with Tchernowitz's above mentioned publication project of the Talmud until November 1924. Together with Zvi Wisslawski, one of the members of the *haburah,* Kaufmann collaborated in the publication of the short-lived Hebrew journal,

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[118] "…befriedigt der Jargon die niedrigern geistigen Bedürfnisse…," *Der Jude* 1 (1916–17): 411.

[119] They were Abraham Sonne and Harry Torczyner; see Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 51, n. 143.

[120] See Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 55.

[121] See Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 56–66.

[122] See Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 68ff.

Atidenu (Our Future) in an editorial capacity.[123] It is not known, why it ceased to be published after merely three months. Conceivably, this might have been the result of the overall precarious economic situation prevalent in the Weimar Republic, which was particularly acute at that time.

The dire economic situation affecting most people in the Weimar Republic is likely to have been a significant factor thwarting Kaufmann's efforts to find employment, which would have provided him with a reliable and stable income. It is not documented why Kaufmann's applications were unsuccessful at both the Jewish Community for a librarian's position in 1925, and at the Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums in the following year, where he presumably sought appointment for a teaching or research position.

However, material Kaufmann submitted with these two applications[124] does shed light on how cautious he was to avoid resembling an "Ostjude" vis-à-vis his co-religionists in Berlin, one of the most important and vibrant west European hubs of Jewish cultural and intellectual life.[125] While Kaufmann did not attempt to deny his east European background, he was careful to insinuate suggestively that his rich Jewish culture and education was the outcome of his university education in west Europe. When he has to mention the modern Yeshiva in Odessa he is mindful to replace the dirty word "Yeshivah" with the urbane designation "University for Jewish Studies."[126]

8. Yehezkel Koifman's Life Work

True to a 19th century tradition of scholarship that was still palpable through the beginning of the second half of the 20th century, Yehezkel Koifman was one of the last architects of a *Lehrgebäude,* an intellectual system that seeks to explicate its subject matter comprehensively. The distinctive characteristic of such closed systems tended to be their implicit axiomatic presupposition that they provided nothing less than a water-tight interpretation of their subject matter—a notion with which succeeding generations tend to experience unease.[127] However that may be, each of Koifman's two opera magna constitute separate *Lehrgebäude,* while also serv-

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[123] This journal was the mouth piece of *tarbut* ("Culture"), a Hebrew cultural movement that had originated in Eastern Europe, see Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 56.

[124] A CV submitted with his application to the Jewish Community Berlin of 19 May, 1925 (documented in Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 116) and a letter of motivation to the Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums of 28 February, 1926 (documented in Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 117–19).

[125] Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 56–59.

[126] "Hochschule für jüdische Wissenschaft."

[127] On Koifman's *Lehrgebäude* and its methodological aporia, see Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 83ff.

ing as pillars of his larger *Lehrgebäude,* a comprehensive two-tier structure, that needs to be appreciated as an ensemble.

It is Koifman's second opus magnum of some 2,500 pages, *Toledot*, for which he is primarily known outside the Hebrew language discourse as Yehezkel Kaufmann. While this work might, rightly or wrongly, be considered reminiscent of a "Theology of the Tanakh,"[128] it is indeed the most significant contribution made by a Jewish savant to historical-critical Bible scholarship in the 20th century.[129] However, prior to this publication, Koifman had already been recognized as ranking among the greatest Jewish intellectuals of his time for his earlier Hebrew opus magnum of over 1,000 pages, which had been published around his fortieth birthday: *Golah venekhar* (Exile and Foreign Lands A Socio-Historical Study on the Issue of the Fate of the People of Israel from Antiquity to the Present, 1929–1930; henceforth, *Golah*).[130]

It was this first opus magnum that established Koifman's fame and reputation as an exceptionally profound and creative scholar in the Hebrew language discourse. For his intellectual biography this comprehensive social history of the Jewish people is highly significant. It reveals much of both the structure of his entire work, as well as many of the issues that interest and pre-occupy him throughout his life-time.

In 1933, *Golah* earned its author the first Bialik Prize for Jewish Studies to be awarded.[131] Haim Nahman Bialik, one of Koifman's teachers and paternal friends, was euphoric about the significance of his former student's

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[128] Regrettably, this non-felicitous notion cannot be undone in the sub-title of my intellectual biography of Koifman (Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg*): although Koifman's interpretation of the Bible comes across as a closed system, the theology-terminology is nevertheless misleading. His work is not indebted to the genre of "Theology of the Old Testament," rooted in Protestant theological tradition.

[129] It was not before 1960 that Kaufmann's contribution to Bible scholarship has become accessible in European languages: Books 1–7 (i.e., vols. 1–3) were published in an abridged translation, which became a classic of 20th century Bible scholarship: Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel, From its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*, translated and abridged by Moshe Greenberg, Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1960. In 1977, this was complemented by an unabridged English translation of book 8 (i.e., vol. 4): Yehezkel Kaufmann, *History of the Religion of Israel, Vol. IV: From the Babylonian Captivity to the End of Prophecy* (trans. C. W. Efroymson; New York and Jerusalem: Ktav, 1977). In a European language the most comprehensive rendering of Koifman's interpretation of the Priestly Code and priestly literature in the Pentateuch is Krapf, *Priesterschrift*, 210–78.

[130] 1929: Books 1–2 (= Vol I); 1930: Books 3–4 (=Vol. II) by Dvir Publishers, Tel Aviv. While *"Gola veNechar"* translates effortlessly to German as *Exil und Fremde*, the Hebrew notion *nekhar* (German: "Fremde") needs to be rendered with both "estrangement/ alienation" and "foreign lands" in English. Hence the English translation of the title ought to convey "*Exile and Estrangement/Alienation/Foreign Lands,"* followed by the subtitle.

[131] In the last decade of his life Koifman was awarded the Bialik Prize a second time (1956), followed by the Israel Prize (1958) and the Bublik Prize (1961).

contribution to the Jewish and Hebrew academic discourse. As early as 1930 he prevailed on Judah Leon Magnes (1877–1948), the first chancellor of the Hebrew University, to have Koifman appointed to a professorship.[132] However, in spite of Bialik's moral authority in the cultural and intellectual scene of the *yishuv,* his intervention failed, and he did not live to see Koifman's belated appointment to the faculty of the Hebrew University in 1949.[133]

Considering that Bialik was not alone to realize the significance of *Golah* as an exceptionally original, if not brilliant work, it might appear paradoxical that the impact of Koifman's early opus magnum is not comparable to the by far more enduring effect of his second one, *Toledot*. Inter alia this might be due to the lack of an adequately comprehensive translation to a widely read European language in a timely fashion. Koifman's correspondence does indeed document that publishing (abridged) translations of *Golah* to Yiddish, Polish and English was being considered in the 1930s and after World War II, albeit without any outcome.[134] The short summary of *Golah* authored by Koifman himself in German in 1936 was not published at the time.[135] However, the circumstances of Koifman volunteering to write it illustrate that *Golah* was generating interest outside the *yishuv* and among an audience for whom the Hebrew language barrier would need to be overcome.[136] Eventually, only after the span of two generations, the three chapters of *Golah* on the inception of Christianity were published in English.[137]

Ultimately, the impact of *Golah* has never matched its significance. Often underestimated, Koifman's highly original early opus magnum provides analyses covering a broad range of issues, many of which have lost little of their pertinence. Back in the 1930s the relatively small impact of *Golah* is remarkable, considering that Bialik and others regarded it as an outstanding work with nothing contemporary in Hebrew to rival it.[138] Likewise, there appears to be an inescapable irony to such a significant Hebrew work on predicaments of Jewish history being authored in Berlin during the 1920s.

In the context of Koifman's life work, *Golah* is a crucial pillar. For it was not *in spite* of Koifman's interest in the social history of the Jewish people that he produced his very comprehensive, albeit ultimately uncompleted history of biblical religion: rather, it was *because* of Koifman's interest in Jewish social history that he embarked on authoring another opus

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[132] For an English translation of Bialik's letter to Magnes, see pp. 269–70 in this volume.

[133] On the circumstances of Koifman's overdue appointment, see the paragraph below, "The Hebrew University of Jerusalem," pp. 39–44.

[134] *Kaufmann Archive,* nos 4, 115, 121; see Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 61.

[135] First published in 1990 by Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 123–33. For an English translation see pp. 273-281 in this volume.

[136] *Ibidem.*

[137] Yehezkel Kaufmann, *Christianity and Judaism* is the translation of *Golah,* vol. 1 chaps. 7–9.

[138] See pp. 269–270 in this volume.

magnum on the origins and history of biblical religion, the scope of which was more than twice as extensive as *Golah.*

The central issues of *Golah* pre-occupied the contemporary Jewish National Movement. The author seeks to explore how the Jewish people, without a claim to a land of their own, had succeeded to survive for two millennia without losing their identity, in spite of being dispossessed of their land and of being constantly exposed to persecution. Koifman's research elucidates how Jewish religion and its preservation became crucial in enabling Jews to maintain their identity as Jews and their Jewish existence. In this dramatic history the Hebrew language played a crucial role: especially in modern times, as religion lost its significance as the cohesive social force, the Hebrew language became the sine qua non of Jewish survival. In Koifman's view the possibility of Jewish identity as a shared historic and cultural experience hinged on intellectual creativity in the recently revived Hebrew idiom, as it was the only language common to Jewry the world over. For Hebrew continued to be the medium of Jewish self-awareness and Jewish experience that it had been since time immemorial, i.e., since the time of Moses.[139]

Koifman's interest in Jewish religion as the cohesive force, holding the Jewish people together for some two millennia was the pivotal issue of his enormous life work. It induced him to focus on researching biblical religion and its monotheistic roots. Indeed, conceptualizing, as he does, the phenomenon of monotheism by elucidating its morphology by means of deduction does raise challenging methodological questions.[140] Nevertheless, Koifman's concept of monotheism has much to contribute to ongoing discussions, that often tend to follow bizarre avenues.[141]

Dating the P source (i.e. the Priestly Code or the Priestly Source in the Pentateuch) to pre-exilic times, Koifman developed a grand antithesis to Julius Wellhausen's interpretation of the historic significance of the Pentateuch. Koifman's contextualizing the largest Pentateuchal source in the era of the First Temple has implications of far reaching purport. This approach mandates re-writing the history of biblical religion, as the entire corpus of pre-exilic literature requires a historic re-contextualization and re-

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[139] On Koifman's perception of the crucial role of the Hebrew language in Jewish history, see Thomas M. Krapf, "Jüdische Identität und Neuhebräisch. Anmerkungen zu Yehezkel Kaufmanns Verhältnis zur Wissenschaft des Judentums," *Judaica* 49, no. 2 (1993): 69–80.

[140] See above, pp. 18-19.

[141] On the relevance of Koifman's conception of biblical monotheism see in this volume: Benjamin D. Sommer, "Yehezkel Kaufmann and Recent Scholarship: Toward a Richer Discourse of Monotheism" (pp.204-239) and discussants (pp.240-249). Likewise my contribution on the discussion in German in the mid-1990s: Thomas M. Krapf, "Biblischer Monotheismus und vorexilischer JHWH-Glaube: Anmerkungen zur neueren Monotheismusdiskussion im Lichte von Yehezkel Kaufmanns Polytheismus-Monotheismus-Begriff," *Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift* 11 (1994): 42–64.

interpretation. Extensive literary corpora need to be re-appraised in relation to P in its pre-Exilic context: JE, Deuteronomy, Deuteronomistic literature as well as the better part of prophetic literature, wisdom literature and the Psalms.[142]

Although Koifman made a good case for the pre-exilic dating of P, his interpretation did, however, fail to explain why the impact of P never became evident before the dawn of early post-exilic times, i.e., several centuries after its creation. However, this deficit in Koifman's presentation of the history of biblical religion has been addressed: Menahem Haran (1924–2015) perceived the phenomenon of the late publicizing of P as a consequence of the semi-arcane nature of priestly religion in the First Temple era. Hence the origin of P pre-dated its publication within the Pentateuch by several centuries.[143]

Regardless of the strong case for dating P to the pre-Exilic era, Wellhausen and his school have had a lasting psychological impact on perceptions prevailing in biblical scholarship. This appears to overshadow the contribution by Koifman and scholars, who over the course of some eighty years have developed a highly differentiating hypothesis on the early dating of P. While their important work is largely ignored, the benefit of cultivating lacunae in scholarship by steadfastly disregarding important evidence, which contradicts one's own position, continues to remain an unexplainable mystery.[144]

Koifman's enormous corpus of groundbreaking work is the most outstanding contribution by a Jewish savant to 20th century Bible scholarship. As discussed, it continues to have a significant impact on the ongoing discourse. Scholars who followed in his footsteps often discovered his work as readers, and found it so compelling that they would pursue their own research along similar lines.[145] Meanwhile Koifman was altogether inept as a teacher. He failed to inspire and guide students in direct interaction, and he never made any attempt to establish his own academic school of thought. In light of this, the impact of Koifman's work on biblical scholarship appears to be phenomenal in a way that is characteristically Koifmanian: whatever significant contributions scholars indebted to Koifman's work have made

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142 See Krapf, *Priesterschrift*, 306–12.

143 Menahem Haran, *Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into the Character of Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977); reprint with a new preface, corrections, and an altered sub-title as: *Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into Biblical Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1985).

144 See Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg*, 106–13; Krapf, *Priesterschrift*, 3–66, 306–12.

145 See for example Moshe Greenberg's recollections included in the present volume, pp. 60–67. (I myself discovered the widely ignored pertinence of Koifman's interpretation of P, his conception of biblical monotheism et al., while working on a PhD thesis, which subsequently morphed to Krapf, *Priesterschrift*.)

and continue to make to Bible research, effectively amounts to a school of thought in biblical studies in its own right.[146] Paradoxically, and by no means less characteristic of Koifman, this academic school evolved in spite of the failure of its spiritus rector to establish it himself.[147]

9. Between Haifa and Jerusalem[148]

In the autumn of 1928, Jesekiel Kaufmann emigrated from Berlin to the *yishuv.* In March 1932, he became a subject of British administered Palestine,[149] where Hebrew was one of the three official languages. After fifteen years in Western Europe as "Jesekiel Kaufmann," the perennial émigré now at his destination, reverted to the Hebrew and Yiddish enunciation of his name: Yehezkel Koifman.

Having arrived in the *yishuv,* Koifman earned his living as a high school teacher in Haifa, as the Hebrew University did not integrate him into its faculty for more than another two decades. This failure appears to be the result of several factors, the most significant ones being personal animosity against Koifman and/or his mentor Bialik, as well as the rejection of historical-critical Bible research. While the latter was the methodological sine qua non of Koifman's ground-breaking discoveries, the savant was acutely aware that cultivating or merely countenancing historical critical investigation of the Bible was beyond the potential of the Hebrew University. Ultimately, the contribution of the Hebrew University to Koifman's phenomenal work was but negligible. For it was without the support of the only university in the *yishuv* that Koifman produced the better part of his second opus magnum, *Toledot,* before he was eventually granted a part-time professorship at the Hebrew University in 1949.

Nevertheless, the twenty-one years following Koifman's arrival in the *yishuv* were another highly productive period in his life. The credit of facilitating the conditions that were indispensable for Koifman's phenomenal productivity during the fifth and sixth decades of his life is due to Arthur Biram (1878-1967), the founder and principal of the *beth hasefer hareali* (Reali High School) in Haifa: from 1929-1949, Koifman produced more than three quarters of his *Toledot,* many other studies on the history of biblical religion and an impressive list of important journalistic essays.[150]

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[146] For a brief survey of research on biblical priestly literature indebted to Koifman's work up to 1992, see Krapf, *Priesterschrift*, 283–303; regarding more recent contributions see Jindo, 98ff.

[147] See above, p. 5.

[148] See Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 67–77.

[149] See Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 67.

[150] Some of his journalistic publications of his earlier Haifa years were published in *behevle hazman: kovez mehkarim uma'amarim beshe'elot hahove* (Tribulations of our Times:

In the 1920s Biram, the principal of the Reali, had traveled to Germany regularly to recruit highly qualified scholars to teach at his high school. Appreciating that serious scholars were keen to obtain positions at the Hebrew University, Biram did his best to discourage desertion by offering his staff tempting working conditions at a time, when the standard of living in the *yishuv* tended to be frugal. For example, Ernst Simon (1899–1988), one of Koifman's friends, was paid a salary of £ 25,- at the Reali High School, in lieu of £ 12,-, the standard salary of a teacher in the *yishuv*.[151] Nevertheless, Simon was happy to join the ranks of those who would not miss the first opportunity of moving on to the Hebrew University, as he resented the paramilitary culture of the Reali High School.[152]

In the context of dynamics such as these, Biram must have been aware of the high likelihood that Koifman was a strong candidate to be lured away to the Hebrew University. *Golah* was a sensational achievement, and Biram must have appreciated, if not admired, it.[153] In the small community of the *yishuv* it would have been almost impossible for Biram *not* to have heard about the—albeit unsuccessful—initiative taken by Bialik, a doyen of the intellectual scene in the *yishuv,* who used all his moral authority to lobby for Koifman's joining the faculty of the Hebrew University as soon as possible.[154] Likewise, Biram would most probably have been aware of Koifman being short-listed for an appointment to the faculty of the Hebrew University in 1931.[155]

These developments took place while Koifman was already on the payroll of Biram's Reali High School. However, given Biram's appreciation of Koifman's intellectual caliber, he may already have realized during the recruitment process before September 1928, that Koifman was likely to be a strong candidate for a position at the Hebrew University before long. Thus Biram might already have promised Koifman preferential working conditions at the Reali High School during his recruitment process, which took place before his arrival in the *yishuv.* Koifman, for his part, was no

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Studies and Essays on Contemporary Issues; Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1936); see also *Yehezkel Kaufmann Jubilee Volume,* 1–6.

151 According to Simon's late widow, Tony Simon, my interview of 12 May, 1995.

152 Ibid. and according to an interview with Ernst Simon's son, Professor Emeritus Uriel Simon, of 5 October, 1995. On the Haifa Reali High School, see Sarah Halperin, *Dr A. Biram vebet hasefer hareali. drachim hadashot umaslul kavua* (Dr. A. Biram and his 'Reali' School: Tradition and Experimentation in Education; Jerusalem: R. Mass, 1970).

153 Biram's letters to Koifman in the 1950s are testimony to the high esteem in which he held Koifman and his work *(Kaufmann Archive,* no. 121c). This is corroborated by the late Professor Chava Lazarus-Yaffé, whose student-teacher relations with Biram in the late 1940s were very close—"like my own family" (see below, p. 34, fn. 156): according to Lazarus-Yaffé, Biram's admiration for Koifman was beyond any imaginable enhancement.

154 See above, pp. 10, 28-29.

155 Together with Umberto Cassuto (1883–1951); see Sara Japhet, "Research and Academic Teaching of the Bible in Israel," *Jewish Studies* 32 (1992): 13–24, esp. 16.

doubt keen on opportunities to concentrate on his research, while trying to join the faculty of the Hebrew University.

As a teacher of Hebrew literature at the Reali High School, Koifman merely taught the upper two forms, while enjoying both reduced teaching loads of no more than six periods per week and the privilege of routine sabbaticals:[156] he only taught from Succoth through Pessah, spending every summer in Jerusalem. Apart from that, every third year Biram gave him twelve months sabbatical in a stretch, during which Koifman would also work in Jerusalem: researching and writing his *Toledot,* both at the precursor of the Jewish National and University Library and at the library of the Ecole Biblique et Archéologique Française, which to this day houses one of the finest and most comprehensive collections of publications on biblical studies.

In 1936 Yom-Tov Hellman, a member of the Odessa *haburah,* and his wife Chaya, immigrated to the *yishuv* from the United States. Their daughter, Batia Kopilevitz, née Hellman in 1922, remembered Koifman as a permanent lodger at her parents' home at Beth Hakerem during his extended stays in Jerusalem in the 1930s and 1940s. In the Hellman household he enjoyed the status of a privileged family member: Batia recalled the relations bonding her parents with Koifman as "triangular," the adults sharing their very personal issues with each other. To the couple's daughter the perennial lodger was an uncle, who never stopped complaining about her practicing the musical scales on the piano. In his spare time he enjoyed reading children's books and thrillers. The latter he would borrow from Naftali Herz Tur-Sinai (Harry Torczyner; 1886-1973), Professor of Hebrew and Semitics at the Hebrew University (1933-1973) and future president of the Academy for Hebrew Language (1953-1973), who in the 1930s and 1940s was said to own the largest collection of thrillers in town.

As a bachelor in his late forties, Koifman was a fussy customer. Chaya Hellman, Koifman's former student, whom he appears to have courted as a young man,[157] would bend over backwards to keep him happy: being a vegetarian Koifman asked for four to five egg yolks per day, which she duly put on the table for him. On Shabbath she treated him to a *gefillte fish* substitute based on almonds, prepared especially for him.

Among Koifman's friends and acquaintances, there is broad agreement that he was very frugal. The books he possessed could barely fill a short shelf. Indeed, with the paucity of his possessions he resembled the traveler perennially sitting on his packed suitcase, according to Batia Kopilevitz. He never owned more than one suit at a time. It was tailor-made, and he would wear it for many years. On the rare occasions when he did opt for a new one, Chaya Hellman obliged to his request to accompany him to the tailor.

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[156] The following is based on my interviews with the late Professors Chava Lazarus-Yaffé on 1 August, 1995 and Abraham Malamat on 18 October, 1995.

[157] See above, pp. 17-18.

At some point in the 1940s, Chaya was no longer able and willing to put up with Koifman as her perennial lodger. According to Batia's recollection, her mother claiming more space and privacy for herself and her family resulted in Koifman renting an apartment of his own near the Helman's home in the Jerusalem neighbourhood of Beth Hakerem. However, considering Koifman's modest income as a high school teacher—which conceivably might have been no more than a part time salary to make up for his extended routine sabbaticals—it appears unlikely that he would have been able to afford moving to his own quarters in Jerusalem, before being appointed to a part-time professorship (50%) at the faculty of the Hebrew University in 1949. In any event, when Koifman did establish his first Jerusalem home, he recruited Chaya's unfailing support to buy furniture. At Wissman's furniture store she witnessed Koifman demanding the most uncomfortable sofa, in order to deter his guests from wasting too much of his precious time.[158]

There is broad consensus that teaching was not Koifman's forte. Although he was obstinate, dogmatic and mostly intolerant of dissent to his views, his demeanor was soft-spoken and timid. Disciplining a class of teenagers was a great challenge for him, which he often failed to master. According to insider testimony,[159] Biram, the authoritative, if not authoritarian principal of the Reali High School, would sit at the back of the classroom to pre-empt disruptions of Koifman's lessons. … About half a century post factum the veracity of such recollections is beyond verification. Likewise, the memories of students, who recalled Koifman as a teacher at the Reali High School in Haifa and at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem fifty years later need to be appreciated as subjective recollections, which cannot offer the same degree of authenticity as more contemporary testimony could proffer.

Bearing this reservation in mind, many recollections I was able to obtain in the 1980s and 1990s from different sources would appear to corroborate a lot of Koifman's idiosyncrasies outlined so far. According to the vivid accounts of both the late Professor Chava Lazarus-Yaffé (1930–1998) and of Ora Lipshitz (born in 1933), Koifman would not only have been uncharismatic, but highly inept as a teacher. Lazarus-Yaffé knew Koifman both as a teacher at the Reali High School in the late 1940s and at the Hebrew University in the 1950s. Although she was an intellectually alert and ambitious student with a very broad range of interests, she never learnt much from Koifman in a classroom or seminar setting. Rather, she experienced him as tedious, demotivating and incapable of challenging his students' interests and intellectual curiosity. His interaction with them was often counterproductive.

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[158] Interview, Batia Kopilevitz, see above, p. 9, fn. 26.
[159] Tony Simon, see above, p. 33, fn. 151.

Having experienced Koifman at the Reali High School, Lazarus-Yaffé was later incapable of "looking up to him" (sic) as an inspiring teacher. He never contributed to her intellectual development, although she did learn to appreciate his work at a young age, but that was not the result of any direct teacher-student interaction.

In 1947-1948, most of the male Reali High School students were active members of the *haganah*[160] and had precious little time for Koifman's insights into Jewish social history, nor for his theories on Jewish anti-Semitism. Emphasizing that neither Koifman nor anyone else could have anticipated the unintended bitter irony a non-felicitous incident would take on in retrospect, Lazarus-Yaffé recalled what under other circumstances could have been written off as routine interaction between big-mouthed teenage students tantalizing a vexed teacher in despair. In any event, Koifman was provoked to what in retrospect would become a tragic faux pas, which Lazarus-Yaffé believed, he might have regretted for many years to come. The occasion was an arduous, unproductive lesson, in which Koifman vented his frustration with a remark to the effect: "What on earth will become of you all?" From the back of the classroom, a smart aleck retorted: "In the end, we'll all die." To which Koifman responded: "Let's hope so!" Lazarus-Yaffé never forgot this incident, because less than a year later, almost the entire class had been killed in the War of Independence.

For Lazarus-Yaffé it was not Koifman himself, but her inspiring teacher Arthur Biram, who introduced her to Koifman's *Toledot.* Continuing to study this work as a student at the Hebrew University, she came to appreciate Koifman's intellectual caliber, his depth and his exceptional contribution to biblical research. But she never experienced his teaching being remotely equal to the originality and depth of his scholarship.

Apart from that she found the constant bickering between Koifman and Isac Leo Seeligmann (1907–1982) highly irritating. Although she perceived Seeligmann as the main culprit, this nevertheless impeded her interaction with Koifman. In oral exams, which the two antagonists would carry out as a "team," candidates tended to feel they needed to square the circle, as pleasing one of the examiners entailed the risk of annoying, offending and estranging his opponent. For Lazarus-Yaffé, this became one of several factors in her decision to discontinue Bible studies after her BA and to immerse herself in Islamic studies instead.

It appears that the outlined counter-productive dynamics were institutionalized. Ora Lipshitz was the last student to face the cantankerous Koifman-Seeligmann examination board in the last exam Koifman ever gave. She experienced this as traumatic, although she did well, as Koifman was

[160] A Jewish paramilitary organization in the British Mandate of Palestine (1921–1948). After the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 it became the core of the Israel Defense Forces.

sentimental due to the personal significance of the occasion.[161] Apart from these recollections of her final exam, Lipshitz remembered Koifman as very punctual, pedantic and unapproachable for students.

Koifman never made a deep impression on Lipshitz other than being the only person to address her—and her peer students—in the third person singular. In contemporary Hebrew of the 1950s this was conspicuously idiosyncratic, especially to the young generation. Likewise, Uriel Simon, having known Koifman as a "sort of Godfather" (sic) in his childhood,[162] found it most irritating to be addressed in this way, when he faced Koifman as an examiner at the Hebrew University some twenty years later. In Simon's perception, Koifman "had no psychological sensitivity for his students".[163] This is reminiscent of Koifman's own recollections of his father, Mordechai Koifman, failing to appreciate the needs of a child.[164]

As a contributor to the cultural and intellectual life of the Jewish National Movement, Koifman was keen to take part and to impact on the discourse of the *yishuv* as a Hebrew writer, not least because he attributed unique significance to the Hebrew language in cultivating and preserving Jewish identity.[165] Indeed, this agenda was a pivotal manifestation of the purpose of his life work. Nevertheless, his ambitions as a Hebrew author did not by any means conflict with those of a scholar of global stature, who wished to make his contribution to biblical scholarship accessible to colleagues, who depended on a rendition of his work in a European lingua franca.

Since Koifman engaged with the work of Wellhausen and his school of thought, publishing his research in German made perfect sense. In a free and open-minded discourse, Koifman's proficiency in German would certainly have empowered him to reach out to his colleagues around the world, when reading German was a sine qua non for any contemporary Bible scholar. The cultural context was that of the antiquated and bitter joke about students and scholars of Jewish studies having to master German as the most important Semitic language *before* Hebrew. Anything but handicapped by linguistic obstacles, Koifman was silenced by insurmountable racist obstruction.

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[161] The following is based on my interview of Ora Lipshitz on 16 December, 1998.

[162] Interview, see above, p. 33, fn. 152; Uriel Simon recalled that when his father, Ernst Simon, and Koifman were colleagues at the Reali, the latter often obliged to baby sit for the Simons to enable them to go out for an evening. On these occasions Uriel would play under the table, at which Koifman would be working—conceivably on his *Toledot*—and whenever the child would become too loud for the savant's liking, he would grunt, or yell: *"sheket! sheket!* (silence! silence!)."

[163] *Ibid.*

[164] See above, p. 6.

[165] See above, p. 30.

Koifman's unsuccessful efforts to publish his work in German in the early stages of his career as a Bible scholar are well documented.[166] Ostensibly his travail amounted to no more than the meager result of two studies published in three installments in the *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft (ZAW)* in 1930 and 1933 under the heading "Probleme der israelitisch-jüdischen Religionsgeschichte."[167] In reality, this represents but the tip of the iceberg of Koifman's attempts to make his contribution to biblical studies accessible to the non-Hebrew reading public.[168] It does appear, however, that in the year of his third publication in *ZAW,* he would have shelved his plans to have anything more published in Germany, where the words and ideas of Jewish and other indexed authors were consigned to public auto-da-fés on 10 May, 1933 and were subsequently ostracized from public discourse. Given these circumstances, it probably would have seemed altogether irrelevant to Koifman that Johannes Hempel, the editor of the *ZAW,* was joining the ranks of the German intelligentsia who were rallying behind Hitler, as early as 1933. Whether Koifman was in fact aware of the pro-active Nazi engagement of the editor of the *ZAW* at that time is not known.

Before the cataclysm struck in 1933, Koifman had been planning to publish his *Toledot* in German for almost an entire decade. An outline of this work,[169] which predates 1933,[170] as well as an impressive number of drafts for studies, are preserved in his archives,[171] documenting that back in the 1920s he had already been making plans for a volume of some 400 to 500 pages.[172] In a letter to Klausner of 1929,[173] Koifman refers to his Bible research, which does not build on the "Wellhausen system," and which he was hoping to publish in *ZAW*. Koifman had shared some of his work with

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166 See Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 68ff.

167 Jesekiel Kaufmann, "I. Das sogenannte theokratische Ideal des Judentums," *ZAW* 48 (1930): 23–32; "II. Der vordeuteronomische Charakter der Priesterkodex," *ZAW* 48 (1930): 32–43; *ZAW* 51 (1933): 35–47.

168 The two lexicographic columns, Jesekiel Kaufmann, "Elischa," *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Berlin), VI (1930): 525–26, are not part of Koifman's efforts to publicize methodologically argued biblical research to the non-Hebrew reading public. However, with regard to his intellectual biography it is worth noting that most of his fifteen entries in *Encyclopaedia Judaica. Das Judentum in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Berlin I (1928)–X (1934) document his interest of the 1920s and 1930s in the late period of Second Temple Judaism, the very period that was later omitted in his uncompleted *Toledot* (for a complete list of these entries see Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 143–44).

169 Entitled, "Allgemeiner Plan meines Werkes Geschichte der israelitisch-jüdischen Religion," published in Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 120–22 and in Krapf, *Priesterschrift*, 315–17.

170 Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 70–72.

171 *Kaufmann Archive,* no. 76.

172 For a detailed assessment of this material see Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 68–72.

173 Joseph Klausner Archive, National Library of Israel (ARC. 4° 1086/444).

Professor Ernst Sellin (1867–1946), who "believes these studies are the beginning of a new era in Bible studies".[174]

However, since Hempel was in the process of joining the Nazis, it is not at all surprising that his letters and messages to Koifman of 1931–1932 unequivocally reveal that the editor of *ZAW* was dragging his feet and systematically obstructing the publication of Koifman's work.[175] After 1945, Koifman never renewed his early efforts to publish his work in any other language than Hebrew. Six pages that appeared in 1954 were his last German publication: this was merely a response to a former neighbour and Bible scholar in Haifa, Elias Auerbach (1882–1971), who published much of his works in German, the contents of which Koifman found irritating.[176]

As of 1960, three years before Koifman's death, his *Toledot* finally did become accessible in English, to the non-Hebrew reading public.[177] By the end of 1962, the Catholic Swiss publishing house, Benziger Verlag, was considering to publish either a complete or an abridged German translation.[178] The circumstances that pre-empted the implementation of this project are not on record. Conceivably, a large and expensive translation project of a scholarly work that had already become available in a European language would have involved a high risk, particularly for a publishing house already confronted with manifold difficulties, which ultimately led to a protracted process of unfriendly take-overs in the 1980s and 1990s.

10. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

In October 1949, on the eve of Yehezkel Koifman's sixtieth birthday, the distinguished scholar was finally appointed to the faculty of the Hebrew University Jerusalem. At that point almost twenty years had passed since Bialik had urged J.L. Magnes, the first chancellor of the Hebrew University, not to miss a golden opportunity: having authored *Golah,* Koifman was establishing an exceptional reputation for himself. As far as Bialik was concerned, Koifman with his highly promising potential needed to be welcomed as a God-sent asset and a blessing to the fledgling university of the *yishuv*.[179] Meanwhile Koifman's poor presentation skills, his shyness and his often-lacking social skills, as well as his unforgiving polemical style, did little to advance his university career.

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174 Letter to Klausner (my translation from Hebrew).
175 Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 72–75.
176 Yehezkel Kaufmann, "Der Kalender und das Alter des Priesterkodex," *Vetus Testamentum* 4 (1954): 307–13.
177 See above, p. 28, fn. 129.
178 See Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 76.
179 See pp. 28-29 and pp. 269-270 in this volume.

Also, back in the early 1930s, historical-critical Bible scholarship was still controversial at the Hebrew University. And yet, in the long run this is not likely to translate to attenuating circumstances. Historiographers might chose to note that for all their high-flying self-perception and visions, the members of the only academic institution in the *yishuv* failed to live up to their responsibility of integrating in a timely fashion the savant considered to be the most eminent Bible scholar of his generation in both the *yishuv*-Israel and in the Diaspora.[180]

Among Koifman's enemies who systematically obstructed his appointment for two decades, Joseph Klausner stands out: the very teacher to whom the young Koifman, as a student in Odessa and St. Petersburg, had looked up as an intellectual inspiration.[181] Until the end of his life Koifman continued to be grateful to Klausner for having initiated him to historical critical methods of Bible scholarship at the Odessa Yeshiva.[182] Contemporaries perceived Klausner's negative attitude towards Koifman in the 1930s and 1940s as competitive jealousy towards the younger gifted scholar, who had established his reputation with both his rare scope of expertise in a broad field of disciplines, as well as with his exceptionally large corpus of substantive published research.

With regard to Koifman's belated appointment in 1949, the circumstances of his merely obtaining 50% of a professorship at the Bible Department of the Hebrew University are not clear. A reduced teaching load certainly suited the time requirements for his research projects, which were as ambitious as ever. While some contemporaries believe that he himself had requested a half-time position, there does not appear to be any record that would confirm this.[183]

In September 1957, having served as a university professor for merely eight years, Yehezkel Koifman became professor emeritus of the Hebrew University at the age of 67.

Following his move to Jerusalem in 1949, Koifman initially continued to work on his *Toledot,* of which volume 4 was published in 1956.[184] This was the last part of this work to pass through the printing press, leaving Koifman's phenomenal contribution to 20th century biblical studies uncom-

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[180] The diplomatic manner in which Moshe Greenberg described these dynamics at a time, when he himself did not yet have an insider's perspective of the Hebrew University, circumscribes some of the pertinent issues without, however, clarifying the crucial responsibility of the university: "His [i.e., Kaufmann's] unorthodoxy (in both the traditional and critical sense), his scope (from the ancient Near East to modern social movements), and his uncompromising self-assurance combined to keep him out of the Hebrew University during the best twenty years of his creative life." *Judaism* 13 (1964): 78.

[181] See above, p. 11.

[182] See above, p. 9-10.

[183] No significance ought to be attributed to this lacuna, since record keeping and data management is not a forte of the administration of the Hebrew University.

[184] See above, p. 28, fn. 129.

pleted: according to the savant's initial plan, he had never intended to have his second *opus magnum* end with the last biblical prophets, but with the end of the Second Temple period. However, in *Golah*[185] Koifman had expounded his earlier perception of the late Second Temple period, some of which was later published in English.[186]

During the last years of his life, Koifman persisted in digressing from his initial plans for his *Toledot*—to the disappointment of "all (his) friends."[187] However, Koifman disagreed. He was pre-occupied with the pressing need to research the early periods of *biblical* history before completing his ambitious *Toledot.* The first result of this new pursuit was the monograph, *The Biblical Account of the Conquest of Canaan* (1953).[188] His final works were two commentaries, published only in Hebrew, on the Books of Joshua (1959) and Judges (1962). For Koifman this digression was mandatory as these two books were about the beginnings of the people of Israel and its religion, which, in his view, contemporary scholarship failed to appreciate.

A legend has it that some time in the forth decade of his life Koifman had missed his own wedding: on the spur of the moment, he was said to have decided that whatever he was doing at a library in Berlin just then needed to take precedence. This universal apocryphal anecdote about a stuffy professor losing himself in idiosyncratic pursuits reflects a tragic twist to Koifman's fate. In the last stages of his life he did come to the conclusion that authoring a phenomenal bibliography in lieu of leading a more fulfilling human existence, was backfiring on him, at the very point, when he felt altogether defenseless. He began to perceive his life style as a celibate recluse without raising a family of his own as an irreparable omission.[189] He was indeed desperate wanting to marry his house-keeper, Eliza Grinz. They never did, but he bequeathed her some of his modest savings.

Presumably, it was about one year after his retirement in September 1957 that Koifman was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease. His archives contain some scientific publications on his illness, which would appear to indicate that psychologically Koifman was trying to engage with his condition in a pro-active manner.

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185 See above, p. 28, fn. 130.

186 See above, p. 17, fn. 79.

187 Koifman in a letter to Moshe Greenberg of 12 June, 1960; see Greenberg's recollections inlcuded in the present volume, pp. 60–69, see p. 63.

188 See above, p. 25, fn. 115.

189 The following is based on many conversations with Menahem Haran between 1985 and 1990. Haran admitted that his relations with Koifman were very complex, ranging from Koifman's refusal to support Haran's PhD in its critical final stage (see above, p. 5, fn. 8) to relatively close relations between the student and his teacher towards the end of the latter's life. Be that as it may, much of Haran's take on Koifman's personal tribulations at the end of his life was corroborated by accounts of other contemporaries, e.g. Abraham Malamat and Batia Kopilevitz.

The National Academy of Science, the pre-cursor of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, was founded on 27 December, 1959. Three months later, its President Martin Buber invited Koifman to join the Academy Committee.[190] It is not documented, whether Koifman attended any of its meetings. Conceivably his deteriorating health prevented him from doing so. Likewise, there is no record that Koifman was elected to join the members of the Academy.

In 1959 or 1960, Koifman moved into an apartment located in the same building where his friend and colleague Avraham Malamat resided.[191] Together with his wife he provided support to Koifman.[192] Although he was very frail, he continued his research and his writing. With hardly any books to call his own he wrote much of his Commentary on the Book of Joshua in Malamat's study-library. Malamat recalled that his cherished neighbour was manually too inept to install a letter-box large enough to accommodate off-prints of journal articles. Koifman's pragmatic solution was to add his name to the Malamats' letter-box.

During the last two or three months of his life Koifman was haunted by hallucinations, a symptom of Parkinson's Disease that apparently is not uncommon. About three times Koifman's house-keeper or nurse alerted the Malamats in the middle of the night. On each of these occasions they found their friend trembling with fear, reporting voices he was hearing on the street outside and visions of Jehu and his men, who were, Koifman was convinced, threatening him. On these occasions Koifman quickly relapsed from Hebrew to German and soon into Yiddish—but never into Russian. Likewise, when two nurses came to accompany him from his apartment to the Hadassa Hospital some three weeks before he passed away, the despairing patient abused them in Yiddish.

According to Batia Kopilevitz, Koifman was afraid of death.[193] For many years he had avoided funerals, including that of his closest friends, Batia's father, Yom Tov Hellman, and of Zvi Wisslawski. When Koifman lay dying in hospital, close friends did their best to comfort him in his acute fear of death. Batia visited him frequently. Haim Gvarjahu was at his bedside reading out Psalms. During the last week of his life Koifman is reported to have remarked: "I have never known how to live a full life, now I don't know how to die."[194]

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[190] Letter from Buber to Koifman of 15 March, 1960, *Archives of the Academy*. I am grateful to the *Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* for their kind permission to refer to this uncatalogued document.

[191] At 1, Rashba Street in the Rehavia neighbourhood of Jerusalem.

[192] The following is based on my interview with Malamat, see above, p. 4, fn. 7.

[193] The following is based on my interview with Kopilevitz, see above, p. 9, fn. 26.

[194] As outlined (see above, p. 36) relations between Koifman and Seeligmann had been conflictual and very complex. However, during the last week of Koifman's life Seeligmann paid his former colleague a visit. A few days later he told Lipshitz (see above,

On 21 Tishri, 5724, the eve of Simhat Torah, Yehezkel Koifman passed away. According to the Gregorian Calendar it was 9 October, 1963. When he drew his last breath the widow of his late friend, Zvi Wislawski, was the only human being by his side.

At that time Chaim Potok was on sabbatical in Jerusalem. He took up the suggestion of his friend, Avraham Malamat, to join the *minyan* that gathered for ma'ariv in Koifman's small apartment every night during the *shiva* period. Potok's moving testimony entitled, "The Mourners of Yehezkel Kaufmann"[195] describes how *kaddish* was said for the deceased, who had no family, and how after the prayers, the savant's mourners commemorated him with readings from his works. Apart from Chaim Potok and several persons who are not named, Ephraim Urbach, Haim Gvaryahu, and Avraham Malamat attended every evening after dusk.[196] Zalman Shazar, Koifman's fellow student in St.Petersburg, was serving as President of the State of Israel, at the time. He joined Koifman's mourners on most of the evenings.

Epilogue

The man, who had denied himself a fulfilling life, left a scholarly legacy, that two generations after his demise continues to have a significant impact. For Yehezkel Koifman, throughout his life a self-made man, no memorial could be more befitting than his bibliography. And yet, a concluding irony, which the deceased could hardly have imagined, must not go unrecorded.

For some two decades the Hebrew University of Jerusalem had never missed a chance of failing to integrate the most significant Jewish historical-critical scholar of the 20th century into its faculty. He joined the faculty belatedly in 1949, when he had already attained the threshold to retirement. In light of this, it does indeed come across as ironic that soon after Koifman's death the Hebrew University mutated to the proud host of a highly conspicuous memorial to Koifman—albeit due to generous philanthropy from overseas.

Clarence W. Efroymson (1898-1988), Professor of Economics at Butler University, Indianapolis (1933-1968), had already been an ardent admirer of Koifman during the latter's life time. As a translator of substantial parts of both Koifman's *Golah*[197] and *Toledot*,[198] Efroymson did much to make

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fn. 161), his former student and friend, about his last interaction with Koifman, citing the dying man's resigned conclusion to his life.

195 Chaim Potok, "The Mourners of Yehezkel Kaufmann," *Conservative Judaism* 18, no.2 (1964): 1–9.

196 At the time Menahem Haran was on sabbatical leave abroad.

197 See above, p. 17, fn. 79.

Koifman's work accessible to the English language public. Apart from his intellectual interest in Koifman's contributions to Jewish Studies, Efroymson was a large-hearted philanthropist, who donated fortunes to a broad range of charitable and humanitarian causes. Less than four weeks after Koifman's death Efroymson endowed the Yehezkel Kaufmann Chair of Biblical Studies at the Bible Department of the Hebrew University.[199] The dedication ceremony took place on 5 November, 1963.

Thus a memorial was established to integrate the eminent scholar in the very department that had closed its doors on him throughout the two most productive decades of his fruitful life.

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[198] See above, p. 28, fn. 129.

[199] It was held by Menahem Haran until September 1993, succeeded by Sara Japhet (February 1996–September 2003), Shalom Paul (March–September 2004) and since January 2005 by the current incumbent, Israel Knohl.

Yehezkel Kaufmann: The Bern Years of a Genius

Thomas STAUBLI

After attending school and studying in Odessa and St. Petersburg, Yehezkel Kaufmann left Czarist Russia for Bern on the eve of the First World War to continue his studies in Bern, where he earned his doctorate. What led him there? What intellectual environment did he encounter in Switzerland? What did he achieve during those years? How was he shaped by his time in Bern?

1. A Ukrainian Jew in Bern

Yehezkel Kaufmann was born on 24 Kislev 5650 (Julian calendar December 4, 1889,[1] Gregorian December 17, 1889) in the Podolian town of Dunaivtsi (Russian Dunayevtsy, today western Ukraine) as the son of Mordechai Nahum Koifmann, who did business with newspapers, among other things, and had a large, poor family.

In 1909, Dunaivtsi had 13,733 inhabitants. Of these, 8966 were Jews, 2349 Ukrainian-Orthodox, 1266 Lutherans, 1188 Catholics, and four Armenians. 65 percent of the inhabitants were, accordingly, Jewish. On a single day, September 21, 1942, in Dunaivtsi, 2588 Jews were murdered by the Nazis. We find an indirect commentary on these atrocities in Kaufmann's magnum opus, *Toledot ha-emunah ha-yisre'elit* (A History of the Israelite Faith, 1937–1956, henceforth *Toledot*), when he characterizes Haman's position in the Book of Esther this way: "In Haman's antisemitic ideology there is, as stated, no religious element. His hatred is racial; he makes no religious and no ethical demand. He seeks to destroy unconditionally. His motivation is personal enmity; the background and fundament, mass hatred. […] In the book of Esther antisemitism appears in its original bestial form, in which it would reappear only in Germany in this latest generation."[2] A Jewish cemetery, whose oldest gravestone is dated 1891, still exists in Dunaivtsi; there is an industrial structure built over an additional, older cemetery.[3]

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1 This date is listed in the matriculation book of the University of Bern, which incorrectly assumes use of the Gregorian calendar.

2 Yehezkel Kaufmann, *History of the Religion of Israel. Vol. IV: From the Babylonian Captivity to the End of Prophecy* (New York/Jerusalem/Dallas: Ktav, 1977), 521ff.

3 http://www.heritageabroad.gov/Portals/0/documents/reports/survey_ukraine_2005.pdf, p. 103.

"When Kaufmann left Russia in the second half of 1913, he had already acquired the methodological skills for his exegetical lifework, which (however) he only began to develop in greater detail many years later. It is also documented that essential intellectual coordinates of his lifework were at least rudimentarily defined even before he visited a west European university."[4] This statement by the judicious biographer Thomas Krapf is important for understanding Kaufmann's stay in Bern. In truth, Kaufmann came to Bern not merely to study, but also to receive an admission ticket into the academic world of the West.

That Kaufmann moved his studies to Bern probably had something to do with his teacher and friend Chaim Tschernowitz. On October 25, 1912, Tschernowitz, arriving from Berlin and Halle together with another student from his school in Odessa, Jankel Surl Berger (1892–?),[5] matriculated at Bern and took his examinations on December 12, 1913, after studying with Karl Marti, Philipp Woker, and Naum Reichesberg.[6] It is quite possible that Kaufmann took over his student room or that of Berger's on Seelandweg 7, near the Botanical Garden, while Tschernowitz was in Würzburg finishing his doctorate with the philologist Maximilian Streck about the formation of the Shulchan Aruch. The work was published a year later in Bern by Max Drechsel. Tschernowitz sought out his brilliant student to enlist Kaufmann's assistance in bringing out an abridged edition of the Talmud. In 1918–1919 Kaufmann took a leave from the University of Bern in order to work with his former teacher in Lausanne on the publication of this work.[7] In the foreword, he is the only one mentioned by name, and labeled a "brilliant student." On May 5, 1914, Kaufmann matriculated in Bern, along with

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4 Thomas Krapf, *Yehezkel Kaufmann: Ein Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg zur Theologie der Hebräischen Bibel* (Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum, 1990), 41. See, too, the formulation in the article by Emanuel Green and Haim M. I. Gevaryahu, "Kaufmann, Yeḥezkel," *EJ* 16 (1971), 1349–51, where there is a discussion not only of Kaufmann studying in Bern, but also of his receiving his doctorate there.

5 Nr. 17296 in the Bern matriculation directory (Berner Immatrikulationsverzeichnis). Berger, among others, has produced a certificate from the academy where Kaufmann took courses in Jewish studies at Odessa. On the same day, immediately before Berger and Tschernowitz, the Russian citizens Dr. med. Oskar Hartoch from St. Petersburg, Chaim Leifka Salk from Traschkun, Jahn Tontegode from Kurland, Schlioma Mendlin from Kharkow, and Meer Rischin from Minsk were matriculated. It is uncertain whether they knew each other.

6 Tschernowitz's matriculation number was 17297. On his studies, see Chaim Tschernowitz, *Die Entstehung des Schulchan-Aruch: Beitrag zur Festlegung der Halacha* (PhD dissertation, University of Bern: 1915, also published as a monograph under the same title Bern: Dreschel, 1915), 80.

7 Chaim Tschernowitz, *Kiṣṣur ha-Talmud: Masekot Berakhot, Rosh ha-Shana, Joma min Talmud Babli. Mesudarot u-Meforaschot* (Lausanne: Impr. Réunies, 5679/1919).

Krasilov native Yom Tov Hellmann, a student of Dubnow.[8] He is registered with this entry: "Hazkel Koifmann (Jecheskel Kaufmann)."[9]

Jewish Bern on the eve of and during the First World War was an extremely vital and colorful world. In 1906 the new synagogue was erected in the Kapellenstrasse, with a Jugendstil (art nouveau) design that included Moorish elements. A majority of the financially strong community's core had Alsatian roots. Albert Einstein, who lived and worked in Bern between 1902 and 1909, laid the foundations for his theory of relativity here. Bern was a center of Bundists (followers of the Algemeyner Yiddisher Arbeyter Bund) and had the most active members of this organization outside Russia until 1917. This was the site of its central office, established in 1902, and the home of its leading mind, Vladimir Medem, who characterized Bern as a "veritable fortress of the Bund."[10] For Yiddishists, moreover, Bern was stylized into an almost mythological site of emancipation far away from their countries of origin. For a short time in 1916–17, even the Yiddish newspaper *Fraie shtime* was published in Bern.[11] This facet of the city's Jewish landscape must have been not insignificant for Kaufmann's unmistakable standpoint as a representative of the Hebraist faction in the language question (more on this in the final section).

2. Kaufmann and the Bern Old Testament scholar Karl Marti (1855–1925)

In addition to practical reasons, another consideration dictating the choice of Bern might have been the fact that the university's Old Testament scholar Karl Marti was then known and respected, in the entire German-speaking guild well beyond Bern, as a representative of the then-dominant Wellhausen school. Thus, not only did Kaufmann escape the turmoil of the war by being in Bern, but he also had the opportunity to study the history of religion from an intellectual outlook diametrically opposed to his own on many points, and to discuss his observations with like-minded people from his time in Odessa and Petersburg.

Karl Marti became Professor of Old Testament in 1895 at Bern, where he founded the department of Semitic studies in 1907. In 1911–1912 he

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8 See Yomtov Hellmann, "Mein Lehrer Schimon Dubnov," *He-Avar* 8 (1961), 10–16 (Hebr.).

9 Matriculation number 18507.

10 Sandrine Mayoraz, "'Wahrhaftige Festung des Bundes': Der Allgemeine Jüdische Arbeiterbund in Bern," in *Wie über Wolken: Jüdische Lebens- und Denkwelten in Stadt und Region Bern, 1200–2000* (eds. R. Bloch and J. Picard; Zurich: Chronos, 2014), 223–240.

11 Shifra Kuperman, "Jiddischisten in Bern: Freiheit und Wissenschaft im Alpenparadies," in *Wie über Wolken* (see previous note), 209–221.

was rector of the university. A farmer's son, he was depicted by colleagues as modest, steady, hard-working, dry, not very original, but fair and helpful. His initial, strong reservations about source criticism notwithstanding, Marti eventually became a follower of Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918). "Nobody in Switzerland did as much to disseminate the new view of the Old Testament as he did."[12] The "new view" essentially says that Pentateuchal law was a late product of the Hebrew Bible that, contrary to its position in the canon, does not precede the appearance of the Prophets but rather follows them and is a product of the era of the presumed religious decline and formalism after the destruction of the First Temple. Beneath this late dating lies a value judgment that, in the context of the time, exhibited latent anti-Semitic features. In his rectorial address from 1911 on the state of research in Old Testament studies, Marti distinguishes among popular religion, legal religion, and prophetic religion.[13] He viewed prophetic religion alone as a genuine forerunner of Christianity.

It was above all Marti's readiness to help others that his Jewish students, mostly from extremely beleaguered backgrounds, learned to value, a helpfulness to which New Year's cards, thank-you notes for letters of recommendation, and similar material that he received between 1902 and 1919 from thirty Jewish students testify.[14] This abundance of Jewish students, many of whom later became rabbis, studying with a Christian teacher whose theological outlook did not really enable him to appreciate the value of the Old Testament message in general and the law in particular, seems peculiar from today's perspective. It shows that daily practical needs, concrete opportunities, and making connections were more important than worrying about ideology. In an obituary for Marti written by his doctoral student Hedwig Anneler we read:[15] "Perhaps the warmest, closest children of his spirit live and teach—excepting Germany—in Palestine. One has to have seen how the eyes of the Zionist teachers there—especially in Jaffa, in Jerusalem, in the Jewish colonies—light up: '*Our* Marti!' And how they will now be clouding over! Every year, men who were his students twenty

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12 Rudolf Smend, *Deutsche Alttestamentler in drei Jahrhunderten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 143.

13 Karl Marti, *Stand und Aufgabe der alttestamentlichen Wissenschaft in der Gegenwart* (Bern: M. Dreschel), 1911.

14 From A. Bension (1910–12), Adolf Braun (1910), Julius Davidovics (1906–07), J.N. Epstein (1912–15), S.B. Eschwege (1910–11 and n.d.), Hermann Felinowitz (1907–08 and n.d.), Jos. Fenerring (n.d.), Salomon Frankfurter 1902, Adolf Garbatti (1911), Max Geyer (1909–11), Joh. Ginsberg (1915), Rudolf Glück (1902 and n.d.), Louis Golde (1908), S. Gronemann (1909), A. Grün (1913), Markus Halpner-Kneller (1910), S.A. Horodezky (1910), Marcus Katz (1910–13), Benjamin Lewin (1907–11), Jehuda Marschak (1907–12), B. Mossinsohn (1910–11), L. Nebenzahl (1911), Aron Neuwirth (1910–13 und n.d.), Leo Niemcewitsch (1913), J. Olschwanger (1914), E. Rosenwasser (1902–08), Gerhard Scholem (1919), Moses Seidel (1912–13), Markus Stieglitz (1907–1908), David Weiss (1907–11).—Berner Burgerbibliothek, N[achlass] Karl Marti 20.

15 *Der Bund*, 28 April, 1925, Nr. 175, 4.

years ago and longer sent him gifts, in spite of their own poor circumstances —for example, the first Hebrew map of Palestine or even if it was only oranges, the honey-sweet oranges of Rishon le-Zion."

Kaufmann, too, apparently appreciated Marti's generosity and supportiveness. But what the young scholar living under conditions of extreme material abstinence wanted from him was neither money nor a title, but books. The only material from the Marti estate containing Kaufmann's handwriting is found not under the category of "Jewish students" but instead among the documents of nineteen additional students.[16] It is a request from April 5, 1918, asking for permission to borrow the tractate Yoma in the edition of Hermann Strack, along with additional books to be used in a scholarly work.[17] The scholarly work in question, of course, is the abovementioned abridged Talmud edition Kaufmann was helping Tschernowitz to edit. Nothing fits in better with a characterization of Kaufmann, who is supposed to have said that he had no biography, only a bibliography.[18]

In his *Toledot* (see below), Kaufmann reviews, in addition to the 1903 fourth edition of Marti's *Geschichte der israelitischen Religion*, the latter's works on the prophets Daniel, Isaiah, and the lesser prophets, published 1900–1904. When Kaufmann mentions Marti in *Toledot*,[19] it is practically always together with other followers of Wellhausen. Mostly, but not always, he puts distance between himself and their opinion, which he sometimes resolutely labels as "strange ideas and casuistries" (161), "groundless" (308), "a modern conceit" (442), and "a double and complete absurdity" (582). For Kaufmann, the merciless, often polemical clarity of the position he takes is at least to some extent a legacy of his traditional Jewish schooling. The same unsparing sharpness also pierces his teacher Tschernowitz when he writes in unvarnished prose: "But Tschernowitz errs" (427).

3. Kaufmann and Benjamin as doctoral students of Richard Herbertz (1878–1959)

From the outset, it seems, Kaufmann did not intend to earn a doctorate with Marti or at a school of theology, as he matriculated, instead, in the school of arts and sciences (the "philosophical faculty"). He chose, like Walter

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16 Berner Burgerbibliothek, N Karl Marti 33.11 (14).
A written text, with meager content written unsteadily in Hebrew letters, about the Prophetic literature of the 8th century by a certain H. Kaufmann from 8 Feb., 1918 (N Karl Marti 7 [3]) has nothing to do with Yehezkel Kaufmann, who at this time consistently signed his name J. Kaufmann.

17 N Karl Marti 33.11 (14)

18 Krapf, *Kaufmann,* 13.

19 Yehezkel Kaufmann, *History of the Religion of Israel,* vol. IV*: From the Babylonian Captivity to the End of Prophecy* (New York/Jerusalem/Dallas: Ktav, 1977).

Benjamin after him, Richard Herbertz as his doctoral advisor, a scholar who had been teaching in Bern since 1910. The Cologne-born son of an industrialist had studied chemistry, philosophy, and physics, was a member of the dueling fraternity Corps Hansea Bonn, and became a Swiss citizen in 1939.

Herbertz held Kaufmann in high esteem. He valued his almost Socratic style of questioning and let him manage the library for the philosophy department. Conversely, Kaufmann also valued his doctoral advisor, with whom he took almost all his courses on philosophy and to whom he expressed his condolences when Germany surrendered at the end of the war, one nationalist to another, as it were.[20]

What made Herbertz an interesting figure for (such different) highly talented Jewish students like Kaufmann and Benjamin? Herbertz came out of the intellectual tradition of Fichte and Hegel. Benjamin discovered in the writings of Hegel the "mental physiognomy […] of an intellectual brute, a mystic of violence, the worst kind there is: but a mystic for all that."[21] It would have been the professor's communicative skills, his philosophizing in conversation,[22] his unconventional style, paired with his kind openness to immigrants, his lateral thinking, which facilitated lateral references—for example, between philosophy and psychology. This, at least, is the way we encounter the old professor in a portrait drawn by the writer Friedrich Dürrenmatt, who studied with him after 1941.[23]

Kaufmann and Benjamin are linked, however, by more than just a common doctoral advisor. Both were scholars who knew exactly what they wanted, Kaufmann perhaps even more precisely than Benjamin. The choice of university and doctoral advisor was therefore secondary for both, and for both what must have mattered was what Benjamin wrote at the end of 1917 to Ernst Schön:[24] "I have gotten to know the university here and, since essentially all universities have rather the same attitude toward my work, I am thinking of getting my doctorate here, to the extent that one can even envision something under conditions that are becoming more difficult every day."

There is, moreover, no single written testimonial indicating that the son of a Berlin bourgeois raised in comfortable circumstances and the poor

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20 Krapf, *Kaufmann*, 52ff.

21 Letter to Gershom Scholem from 31 January, 1918 in *Gesammelte Briefe*, vol. I: 1910–18 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995), 423. The translation used here comes from Scholem's essay "My Friend Walter Benjamin" in *Commentary***,** 12 January, 1981, see https:// www.commentarymagazine.com/article/my-friend-walter-benjamin/ (accessed 8 September, 2015).

22 Phillip W. Balsiger, *Richard Herbertz: Leben und Werk* (PhD dissertation, University of Bern, 1989), 73.

23 Friedrich Dürrenmatt, "Turmbau. Stoffe IV–IX. Das Haus," in *Gesammelte Werke* 6 (Zurich: Diogenes, 1991), 424–429.

24 Composer, writer, translator (1894–1960), friend of Benjamin since their school days spent together. See Benjamin, *Gesammelte Briefe*, 415.

student from Podolia ever crossed paths.[25] They would have had an endless amount to discuss with each other, for both of them were interested in the discovery of the Messianic, of the work of redemption, and of the meaning of history. And both felt compelled to work their way through Kant: "In any case, there are certain questions, like those related to the philosophy of history, that are central for us, but about which we can learn something decisive from Kant only after we have posed them anew for ourselves."[26] Yet while Benjamin approaches the problem on the terrain of literary criticism, Kaufmann works his way through logically, as a dialectically trained Talmudist.

4. Kaufmann's Bern dissertation on sufficient reason

Sufficient reason is the key philosophical principle that nothing happens without a reason, a principle going back to the ancient philosophers, including Cicero (*nihil fit sine causa*), but first explicitly formulated by Leibniz, for whom there was no true fact and no correct statement without sufficient reason, since nothing happens for no reason.

But Hume had shown that it is not rationally possible to derive one phenomenon from another necessarily: "The mind can never possibly find the effect in the supposed cause, by the most accurate scrutiny and examination. For the effect is totally different from the cause, and consequently can never be discovered in it."[27] There is, Kaufmann explains, "nothing present in the phenomena that points to an *internal nexus* of the same thing that some characterize as a reason, others as an origin" (6). From out of the real ground (cause > effect) it is not possible logically to deduce a ground of knowledge (reason > consequence), nor a "'reason for becoming' of the effect" from out of the cause (8). Only probabilities are possible. Nonetheless, Kant wants to demonstrate a "transcendental" connection, but even this does not result in the succession of one thing after another necessarily pointing to a causal relationship, and Hume himself asks if we need to believe in causality on psychological grounds.

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[25] In the published correspondence of Scholem and Buber we also search in vain for Kaufmann's name. But, on his contact with Buber, see below, last paragraph.

[26] Benjamin in letters to Scholem at the end of 1917. *Gesammelte Briefe*, 403; see inid., 362, 390ff., 402ff., 408. English translation used here from *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin, 1910–1914* (ed. and annotated by Scholem and Adorno, trans. Manfred R. Jacobson and Evelyn M. Jacobson; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

[27] David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* (ed. Tom L. Beauchamp; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 111, cited by Kaufmann (13) according to id., *Eine Untersuchung über den menschlichen Verstand* (Leipzig: Meiner, 1911), 39. The numbers in brackets refer to the pages from Jesekiel Kaufmann, *Eine Abhandlung über den zureichenden Grund. Erster Teil: Der logische Grund* (Berlin: Emil Ebering, 1920).

Kaufmann now points out that whatever applies to the effect also applies to the cause, that this is not therefore about cause and effect, but about the essence of logical reasoning altogether. For this, picking up on Husserl, the distinction between (given) content and (logical) form is important. But this distinction also applies to logic itself. For logic, the contents of relationships and therewith meaning are irrelevant. The only relevant thing is "placing-in-relationship" (20) itself. This also applies to quantitative determinations like "in general" and "individual," which is why general premises must also be individualized before reaching a conclusion. The syllogism "All human beings are mortal. Socrates is a human being. Socrates is mortal" (37) can only be understood under the condition that Socrates is also mortal, for only if Socrates is also mortal are all human beings mortal. The necessity of making a clear-cut separation between form and content is something Kaufmann illustrates with examples that show how absurd contents can be linked with each other in a way that is logically correct: "Everything rectangular is round. The circle is rectangular. Therefore the circle is round." (52) Logic, according to Kaufmann, only starts to be science at the point "where the subject has already been understood and formed in the assessment" (54).

Kaufmann was certainly not the first to criticize Kant's logic. He had an important, even if all too little known, predecessor: Salomon ben Joshua (1753–1800), from the Lithuanian town Sukoviborg (near Mir), enjoyed a traditional Talmudic education and began as an adolescent to take in an interest in Maimonides, which is why he called himself Salomon Maimon. He became friends with Moses Mendelssohn and, starting in 1787, became intensely preoccupied with Kant.[28] The major concern he addresses in his critique of Kant's logic is that every subject of a subject-predicate relation is understood intrinsically as an object of consciousness (and not just as part of the relation) and that every predicate is conceived as an object of consciousness in connection with the subject, but that whatever goes beyond this is a purely formal determination, no real thought. In other words: Maimon insisted precisely on that consistent distinction between content and form that was also a guiding concern for Kaufmann's thesis.

Although the east European Jew Salomon Maimon, who never denied his Talmudic education, never received higher ordination from the German philosophy guild or even from Western Jewry[29] and therefore needed to be rediscovered, so to speak, by each generation, he was also not a complete unknown in the heyday of European anti-Semitism. In 1912 the book *Die*

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[28] Salomon Maimon, *Versuch einer neuen Logik oder Theorie des Denkens: Nebst angehängten Briefen des Philaletes an Änesidemus* (Berlin: Ernst Felisch, 1794; reprint Hildesheim: Olms, 2000). Today, tellingly, the reprint is located in the Jewish Studies library at the University of Bern, not in the Philosophy department library.

[29] See Peter Thielke and Yitzhak Melamed, "Salomon Maimon," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/maimon/#4).

Philosophie Salomon Maimons by Friedrich Kunze was published with Carl Winter in Heidelberg. The book is not featured in today's catalogue of the Bern university library. Possibly, therefore, it was never available there. Nonetheless it is hardly imaginable that Kaufmann was not acquainted with the works of this early exponent of the Haskalah, or Jewish Enlightenment. But why does he not mention Maimon even once in his own dissertation? Kaufmann, an intelligent man, certainly had no need to plagiarize. Would it have damaged his doctorate if he had cited Maimon as an authority as part of his own argument? Did Herbertz even advise him not to do so? Or did Kaufmann have to conclude that nobody in Bern was acquainted with Maimon? Was this Kaufmann's quiet and sweet revenge for the lack of any serious reception of the ingenious 18th-century Lithuanian Jew in the West that Kaufmann should take Maimon's argument, which must have seemed immediately obvious to him as a result of their similar training, and get to the heart of it once more with conceptual clarity and conciseness? Was this Kaufmann's way—in an unceremonious, almost playful, and yet (for him) quite satisfactory manner—of securing a doctorate for himself in the (for him) quasi-self-evident, logical intellectual world preceding all argumentation, at a time when he had long since switched the focus of his intellectual energies to other questions about the history of religion now preoccupying his inmost self? Something else pointing in this direction is the fact that the planned second part of his dissertation, in which he was to prove that the problem of causality could not be solved transcendentally in the Kantian manner, never appeared. Maimon had long since produced this proof, and for Kaufmann's work on the religious history of Israel, this kind of work was not needed. There is an irony of history here, in that Kaufmann's contribution to the problem of sufficient reason does not appear to be known even in specialist circles, while Maimon's contribution is indeed acknowledged, though somewhat bizarrely as a thinker *continuing* the Kantian tradition.[30]

5. Kaufmann's perspective on the religion of Israel

In retrospect, Kaufmann's dissertation may seem exotic in the context of everything he wrote. Yet the importance of this aspect for his thinking and teaching should not be underestimated. Thus, his student Leo Isac Seelig-

[30] Hans-Jürgen Engfer, "Principium rationis sufficientis," in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 7 (1989), 1325–1336, never mentions Kaufmann once among 103 references while citing Maimon along with Kiesewetter, Fries, and Jacobi as a founder of the strict distinction between ground-consequence and cause-effect relations (1330). In Yitzhak Melamed and Martin Lin, "Principle of Sufficient Reason," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/sufficient-reason/), too, there is no reference to Kaufmann.

mann is indebted to Kaufmann for the category of dual causality (סבתיות כפולה) as a way to understand the specifically biblical interpretation of how divine and human action are intertwined.[31] But the connection is even more crucial for a complete understanding of Israelite religion. Since, according to the Bible, God revealed himself historically, there is no logical "that" outside the experience of reality handed down within the people. The only source of tradition is God himself. He cannot be derived from anywhere. There is hardly any room for evolutionary perspectives in Kaufmann's thought. Monotheism in its Jewish form, according to him, happened in a revolutionary way as an unfathomable, spiritual creation. For him, subsequent logical developments within the new and, in Kaufmann's understanding, almost inherently closed system need to be clearly distinguished from the original primal insight.

Kaufmann left Bern for Berlin after the First World War and then emigrated to Haifa in 1928. He initially turned to research on the social history of Judaism.[32] The central thesis of the important work he wrote in an attempt to understand contemporary problems from out of Judaism's entire history is that religion alone saved the far-flung Jews from complete assimilation. Here, already, he formulates the fundamental thesis that is also decisive for his later analysis of the religion of Israel, and which he formulates as follows in a 1936 German summary Kaufmann wrote for the attention of the Zionist historian Adolf Böhm (1873–1941): "In Israel a wholly new religious idea, previously unknown to all of humanity, was born, namely the idea of a supra-magical, supra-mythological, single God."[33] This idea was disseminated by an ethno-politically powerless people as a cultural-religious power in a powerful pagan environment in Christian and Islamic form. Ironically, the powerlessness of the Jewish people intensified in the Age of Emancipation because the Jews, to the extent that they remained true to their ancestral religion, continued to be perceived as an alien tribe in modern democracies, and indeed even more so under nationalist circumstances, while they simultaneously lost the privileges granted them by the monarchs that had promoted them and continued to be landless.

In his magnum opus on the history of the Israelite religion,[34] Kaufmann develops this fundamental thesis almost encyclopedically from Israel's

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31 Isac Leo Seeligmann, "Menschliches Heldentum und göttliche Hilfe: Die doppelte Kausalität im alttestamentlichen Geschichtsdenken," in *Gesammelte Studien zur Hebräischen Bibel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 138, n. 1.

32 *Exil und Fremde: Eine sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchung zur Frage nach dem Schicksal des Volkes Israel von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (in Hebrew; 2 vols.; Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1929–30). Chapters 7–9 from vol. 1 appeared in English under the title, *Christianity and Judaism: Two Covenants* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1988).

33 As cited by Krapf, *Kaufmann*, 124.

34 Kaufmann, *Tōledōt hā-emūnā hajjiśra'ēlīt mīmē qedem 'ad sōf bajit šēnī* (4 vols.; Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik and Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1937–1956). The eighth book (vol 4) is availa-

beginnings to the destruction of the Second Temple. He shows how, under the new conditions of an eternal, sovereign God without theogony and thus without derivation from any kind of original materials, the mythological creatures inherited from Canaanite culture turned into creatures of YHWH, the magicians into men of God, and the seers into prophets who did nothing other than proclaim the divine will in the form of miracles and teachings. How the Israelites arrived at this ingenious and original creation of a religion completely different from their pagan surroundings is something Kaufmann cannot explain any further in his capacity as a historian, so that he almost reluctantly becomes a theologian: "Here we are compelled to assume a unique intervention of divine guidance."[35]

Something this verticality also makes clear is a striking closeness of Kaufmann's thinking, in spite of all the differences, to that of his Christian contemporary Karl Barth (1886–1968), for whom Christ cuts through the historical level that we know by an "unknown level" from above. With this concept, Barth radically sets himself apart from every kind of liberal, evolutionary, hyphenated theology. And, just as Kaufmann notes this for Western Judaism, Barth sees dramatic signs of decay in Protestantism starting with the 18th century.

Kaufmann was by no means a biblicist, but he was a prisoner of his basic thesis, from which he derives the point of view he adopts for every case he examines, so that he becomes an ideological apologist whenever historical facts contradict the fundamental thesis. One such case is the Jewish colony of Yeb (the Elephantine island near Aswan), which worshiped a triad of three divinities—Yahu, Anat-Yahu, and Ishim-Betel—for whose cult-images they even resumed taking up a collection after the destruction of their temple by the followers of the neighboring Khnum shrine. In order to salvage his anti-evolutionary perspective on Jewish monotheism, he needs to characterize the Judaism of Yeb as a late syncretism, but he never gets beyond assertions: "During the years of their detachment from the mainstream of Jewish life the Jews of Yeb absorbed something of the religious customs of their Aramaic neighbors. Their cultic practice was 'new,' late, of assimilatory tendency, an unimportant deviation; not 'old,' and not indicative of an earlier stage in the evolution of the religion of Israel. Nonetheless, the Jews of Yeb were monotheists; their temple was a temple of

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ble in a complete English translation: *History of the Religion of Israel. Vol. IV: From the Babylonian Captivity to the End of Prophecy* (New York, Jerusalem, Dallas: Ktav, 1977). There is a summary of the remaining books translated, edited, and abridged by Moshe Greenberg, *The Religion of Israel: From Its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

35 Foreword to 5th printing of the Hebrew edition of 1964, cited by Krapf, *Kaufmann*, 94; cf. Job Jindo, "Recontextualizing Kaufmann: His Empirical Conception of the Bible and its Significance in Jewish Intellectual History," *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 19/2 (2011): 95–129, esp. 126f.

Yahu."[36] Yeb's geographic isolation is the ideal precondition for conservation, not for forms of syncretism, which emerge in places where living cultures interact. What is more, correspondence with Jerusalem shows that the Jews of Yeb did not want to be heretics but sought contact with the center. Kaufmann himself even attests to the zealous character for the Jews of Yeb, something hardly compatible with syncretism.

Like most men of his time, Kaufmann had a blind eye for feminism. Thus, in connection with his argument about the Elephantine, one searches in vain for any reference to the work of Hedwig Anneler, who had earned her doctorate with Karl Marti in 1912. Among the few obligatory courses that Kaufmann would have taken with Marti during the spring semester of 1915, there was a Semitic studies seminar on Aramaic papyri which certainly would have been primarily based on Anneler's work.[37]

6. Kaufmann and Benno Jacob (1862–1945)

In many respects, the thrust of Kaufmann's scholarship receives impressive confirmation from the monumental commentaries on Genesis and Exodus written independently of and parallel to Kaufmann's work by Benno Jacob, rabbi in Göttingen and Dortmund. Like Kaufmann, Jacob sees the developmental theory of religious history as something that renders impossible a proper understanding of the scriptural text, because the evolutionist account always amounts to a Christian devaluation of Judaism. Jacob does recognize that the Torah makes use of an international legal language that had existed for centuries, but one toward which the Torah maintained a stance of sovereign independence. "The Mosaic mishpatim, despite all parallels, did not contain a single sentence which can be proven as word-for-word borrowing from any other source." Like Kaufmann, Jacob emphasizes the old age of the Israelite law. Comparison with ancient Oriental law makes it clear that law presented in the Torah was old on some points, that one should therefore not mock the view that it also contained a legacy of the patriarchs. Like Kaufmann, Jacob argued in terms of social history. According to him, Hammurabi, himself a major landowner and capitalist as king, wanted his law code to promote the culture of the country he ruled, a law he intended to implement by means of the state, meaning police and military. Compared to them, Moses did not have even the slightest of means to compel obedience. "His sole support lay in the appeal of God's

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[36] Ibid., 530.

[37] On Anneler's work and the lack of attention to it, see Judith Hélène Stadler and Ernst Axel Knauf, "Hedwig Anneler (1888–1969) und ihre Berner Dissertation: Zur *Geschichte der Juden von Elephantine* von 1912. Eine Erinnerung zum hundertjährigen Doktorjubiläum einer bemerkenswerten Frau," *lectio difficilior* 2/2011 (http://www.lectio unibe.ch/11_2/pdf/stadler_knauf_2011.pdf).

will and command, the self-dependence upon the morality of public opinion along with a popular sense of justice. Only religious and moral factors existed." The legal passages preserved in the book of Exodus were not even intended as a law book, but more as religious-moral education. "They wished to inculcate a fear of God and respect for man and his basic rights" with the help of inalterable norms.[38]

Unlike Kaufmann, Jacob dismisses multiple sources as an impossibility, even if he concedes that the author of Genesis, which he regarded as having originated from a *single* quill, used sources.[39] Although aspects of Kaufmann's views are based on Jewish schooling and rest upon detailed knowledge of a Talmudic education, he followed German exegetical research positively, though he dated the Pentateuch's sources very differently. Consequently, he opened up the possibility of a debate that today, almost fifty years after his death, seems gradually to be getting underway even in German-speaking circles.

7. Outlooks on the reception and topicality of Kaufmann

On the foundation laid by Kaufmann, there was and will come to be more research done in Jerusalem, especially by Menachem Haran, Abraham Malamat, Israel Knohl, Sara Japhet, Nili Wazana, Baruch J. Schwartz, and in the United States by Jacob Milgrom and Benjamin Sommer, among others.[40] In German-speaking Europe, it was only in 1992 that Thomas Krapf's dissertation cast light on Kaufmann's achievement.[41] In the meantime, the current scholarly discussion in Europe about the Torah's Priestly writings has come to include a greater frequency of approaches contending with the analyses of the Kaufmann school.[42] The discussion is leading to qualifications on both sides. Kaufmann's anti-evolutionist approach was criticized even by his students and colleagues like Isac Leo Seeligmann, who experi-

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38 Benno Jacob, *The Second Book of the Bible: Exodus* (trans. Walter Jacob; Hoboken, NY: Ktav, 1992), 1072ff.

39 Id., *Das Buch Genesis* (Berlin: Schocken, 1934; repr. Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 2000), 10, 949ff.

40 For an overview of the reception of Yehezkel Kaufmann among Jewish scholars see Ziony Zevit's contribution to this volume.

41 Thomas Krapf, *Die Priesterschrift und die vorexilische Zeit. Yehezkel Kaufmanns vernachlässigter Beitrag zur Geschichte der biblischen Religion* (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 119; Freiburg, Switzerland: Universitätsverlag and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1992). See also Thomas Staubli, *Leviticus. Numeri* (Neuer Stuttgarter Kommentar zum Alten Testament 3; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1996).

42 For example, Christophe Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch: A Study in the Composition of the Book of Leviticus* (Forschungen zum Alten Testament II/25; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007).

enced his elder colleague[43] as an interlocutor with incredibly broad comprehension, a wit all his own, and as a teacher who was mild-mannered toward his students. One could not, across the board, "deny the existence of any mythical elements in the faith of Israel. We should not equate whatever is contained in the Hebrew Bible with whatever was widespread in Israel—after all, it is not as if the Bible lacks for remains of myth."[44]

On the other hand, it was important for Western exegesis to depart from the Wellhausen paradigm and appreciate that law and prophecy are closely related to each other and cannot be divided from each other for the sake of a clerical ideology in which prophecy is seen as original, vital, and old while the law is understood as a degenerated and younger product of prophecy. If Rainer Achenbach's recent reading[45] of the oldest extant Hebrew inscription, a writing exercise on a clay shard from the 10th century BCE discovered in 2008 at Khirbet Qeiyafah, proves correct—a reading whereby this text contains maxims that demand legal equality for slaves, widows, orphans, and strangers—then Kaufmann's thesis about the old age of the laws will have acquired a strong objective foundation.

The topicality of Kaufmann's credo hardly needs to be stressed in light of growing religious fundamentalism in Israel and many other places in the world. For him there is no gap between (fundamentalist) religion and the (secular) nation. On the contrary: in the oldest writings of Judaism that we can still understand—according to Kaufmann these are the Priestly writings ascertainable from the Torah—critical thinking was already beginning to take shape toward the end of the second millennium BCE, a type of thinking that was handed down and developed further over several centuries in rabbinic Judaism. It does not pose a contradiction but is rather one of the foundations of modern scholarship and it should be continued in this spirit.

8. Beyond the Bible

There are two essays published in German during Kaufmann's time in Bern[46] in which he stands up for the view that Hebrew needs to be seen and

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43 Isac Leo Seeligmann, "Professor Yehezkel Kaufmann," in *Yehezkel Kaufmann Jubilee Volume: Studies in Bible and Jewish Religion dedicated to Yehezkel Kaufmann on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday* (ed. Menachem Haran; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1960), XII.

44 Isac Leo Seeligmann, *Gesammelte Studien zur Hebräischen Bibel* (Forschungen zum Alten Testament 41; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 164, n. 7; see also the critical remarks on 198, n. 26 and 215, n. 54.

45 Rainer Achenbach, "The Protection of *Personae miserae* in Ancient Israelite Law and Wisdom and in the Ostracon from Khirbet Qeiyafah," *Semitica* 54 (2012): 93–125.

46 Kaufmann, "Unsere 'Friedensstifter'," *Jüdische Rundschau* 19 (12 May, 1916): 151ff.; "Die hebräische Sprache und unsere nationale Zukunft," *Der Jude* 1 (1916/17): 407–418.

promoted as the national language of Jewry. He sees the dying out of Hebrew as a cultural language owing to assimilation as a major reason for Jewish loss of identity and—writing in quadrilingual Switzerland!—holds the view that a people can exist as a historical individual only thanks to language: "Without a common national language there is no organic interaction between the individual parts of society."[47] Foreign-language literature with Jewish content, which is so characteristic of Alexandrian Judaism, he characterizes as a "hallmark of national degeneration," while he sees Western European Jewry in the condition of "a national petrification that comes quite close to death" and Yiddish as a jargon for satisfying lower spiritual needs, as a "vulgar and woman's language."[48] Martin Buber, the editor of *Der Jude*, asked Kaufmann twice to abstain from this kind of polemics. Kaufmann, however, remained unreasonable. Buber had no alternative text and was ultimately magnanimous enough to print the article uncensored.[49]

Here we encounter a Kaufmann who, outside his logical world of thought and outside the fence around the Torah with which he was as familiar as with his vest pocket, is strangely lost, vulnerable, and probably for that reason aggressive; an east European Jew in western Europe who realizes that even among local Jews he is regarded as a second-class person, that there is still a rich Hebrew culture alive in the world from which he comes, a culture he misses and for which the foreign-language "Science of Judaism" is no substitute; a man, too, for whom women live in another linguistic world, if not on another planet, who remained a bachelor during his entire lifetime, although he is said, according to the testimony of acquaintances, to have deeply regretted this at the end of his life.[50]

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47 "Hebräische Sprache," 409.

48 Ibid., 411.

49 Krapf, *Kaufmann*, 51, with notes 139–144. Kaufmann's opposition to Abraham Geiger and other exponents of the "Wissenschaft des Judentums" regarding Jewish identity and language, is discussed in Thomas Krapf, "Jüdische Identität und Neuhebräisch. Anmerkungen zu Yehezkel Kaufmanns Verhältnis zur Wissenschaft des Judentums", *Judaica* 49/2 (1993): 69-80.

50 Thomas Krapf orally.

Personal Views of Yehezkel Kaufmann*

Moshe GREENBERG

Perhaps it will be regarded as strange that I, whose contact with Professor Yehezkel Kaufmann for thirteen years was mostly through correspondence, have chosen to tell about my personal impressions of him. Didn't many others sit in his very presence for those years and know him face to face? What, then, could be the special value of my testimony? I believe that the face of the man that he presented to me was different than what his acquaintances in Israel knew, because the relations between us were devoid of those tensions that prevail among colleagues, or between a teacher and the student who is dependent on him, and in general among members of a small clique who see each other and are involved, sometimes not in the best way, in each other's lives. My relation to Professor Kaufmann was simply the relation of an admirer toward one whom I appreciated as the greatest teacher of Bible in his generation. I saw him as one who added to biblical scholarship the intellectual lightning that had been missing from it since the generations of the founders, and restored to the Bible its eminence as a unique spiritual treasure. In the connection that I established with him, I was blessed as one who finds a clear spring after drinking from polluted waters.

I first encountered *Toledot ha-emunah ha-yisre'elit* (History of the Israelite Faith, 1937–1956, henceforth *Toledot*) when I was an undergraduate student at the University of Pennsylvania in the late 1940s. The more I read it, the more I was convinced that this work was a powerful new broom that swept the house of biblical studies clean of all the layers of grime that had collected in it, while filling it with new inspiring content. I appointed myself the apostle of the gospel according to Kaufmann, and my first objective was to convert the heart of my esteemed professor Ephraim Speiser to this objective. For my baccalaureate thesis I chose to survey the research on the history of the Israelite priesthood. I was sure that Kaufmann's position—which I presented at the end as refuting all the previous positions—would win my teacher's approval. Whether he was convinced by my paper or not, he urged me to shorten it in order to submit it for publication in a scholarly journal. I shortened my presentation and submitted it for publication in the

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* Remarks delivered at an evening program organized by the (Israel) National Academy of Sciences, commemorating Yehezkel Kaufmann's 101st birthday (17 Kislev 5751/ December 3–4, 1990). Translated from the Hebrew text in *Mada'ei Hayahadut* § 31 (World Union of Jewish Studies, 1991), 81–85 by Leonard Levin.

Journal of Biblical Literature, but it was not accepted. I shortened it again and it was finally accepted in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* under the title, "A New Approach to the History of the Israelite Priesthood." Thus in 1950 the name Yehezkel Kaufmann appeared for the first time in the pages of an English-language scholarly journal. I took courage and sent a copy to my esteemed "rabbi" in Jerusalem, along with a letter in which I introduced myself to him.

A photocopy of that same letter—along with photocopies of twenty-five additional letters that I sent to Kaufmann—came back to me recently thanks to Thomas Krapf, a German doctoral student who has been studying the responses of German scholars to Kaufmann's teachings.[1] The letters were found bundled in the Kaufmann archive in the National and University Library in Jerusalem. I have combined these letters that I sent to him over the course of thirteen years until his death in 1963, with twenty letters that Kaufmann wrote to me, from 1955 onward, which I have kept. I offer you here nuggets of that correspondence, which will shed light on the man's character from my perspective.

Here is how I introduced myself to him in my first letter (April 11, 1950):

> My dear and admired Sir and teacher:
>
> I am very honored to send you[2] herewith a copy of an article that I wrote on your important scholarly work, *Toledot ha-emunah ha-yisre'elit*. Although I am only a college student, tender in years and wisdom, I have summoned up the courage to publish a survey of a topic taken from your researches.
>
> It is several years now that I have been reading your books with heartfelt pleasure and great enthusiasm. About five years ago I plunged into the depths of biblical scholarship and was almost drowning in the waves of foreign, hostile criticism when to my great happiness I encountered your books in my father's house. From then until now I drink your words thirstily in the faith that they interpret the scriptures as closely as one can get to their plain sense, and capture their deeper meaning.
>
> This short survey is the essence of a longer article in which I reviewed the currently prevailing views concerning the history of the priesthood, and

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1 Translator's note: When these remarks were first delivered (in December 1990), Thomas Krapf had just published—or was about to publish—his book, *Yehezkel Kaufmann: Ein Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg zur Theologie der Hebräischen Bibel* (Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum, 1990).

2 Translator's note: Greenberg refers to Kaufmann in the third person throughout this letter: "to send my dear Sir an article on his scholarly work…from his researches…that I have been reading the books of my dear Sir…" etc. This sounds even more formal and pretentious in English than in Hebrew, so I have rendered it in the second person to conform to the way this letter would probably have been written had it been originally composed in English.

> compared them to your views. I offer you this composition of mine in joy and trepidation—joy, that I have been privileged to publicize your name and some of your teaching to a wide audience of readers in oriental antiquities who have not yet heard of them, and trepidation that I may have unwittingly misrepresented your views and not conveyed them with fidelity. I hope you will forgive me from such unwitting errors.

In his response (reconstructed from the content of the next letter, as his letters to me prior to November 10, 1955 were lost), Kaufman expressed the wish that his book *Toledot ha-emunah ha-yisre'elit* should be translated into English—a suggestion on which I jumped. I honed my skills by translating his article on idolatry in the Bible ("The Bible and Mythological Polytheism," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 70 [1951], 179–197) as well as his article "The Biblical Age" in *Great Ages and Ideas of the Jewish People* (New York: Modern Library, 1956), 3–92. In the meantime, I went about seeking a publisher who was ready to commit to the larger assignment. It became clear that the best proposal came from the University of Chicago Press: to undertake a one-volume English abridgement of the multi-volume *Toledot ha-emunah ha-yisre'elit*.

A measure of Kaufmann's compliance was revealed to me in his reaction to the arrangement of royalties that I proposed to the University of Chicago Press (his letter of December 28, 1956):

> I rely on you concerning everything pertaining to arranging financial matters and formalities…. You need to worry first of all about yourself: that you shall receive compensation that will permit you to work comfortably. I can wait. In any case, what you did is done, and there is no need to change anything, if the change is not to your advantage.

In the meantime, my oldest son was born, and Kaufmann blessed him with the traditional blessing, "May it be [God's] will that you be privileged to raise him to Torah and good deeds, and that you will derive great satisfaction from him." I noticed his omission of the term "marriage canopy,"[3] and I did not know if this was deliberate or not, until there arrived, seven years later (in his letter of June 7, 1962) his blessing on the birth of our third son, "May it be [God's] will that you be privileged to raise the red-haired one with lovely eyes [a quote from my letter] to Torah and good deeds." Then I knew that his formulation was deliberate, that this was the complete blessing of a confirmed bachelor.

I found that Kaufmann took easily to debate, and his arguments provided a glimpse of his outspoken personal positions. In the fall of 1956 appeared the eighth volume of *Toledot ha-emunah ha-yisre'elit*. When I congratulated him on the appearance of the volume I noted that I disagreed

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[3] Translator's note: The traditional blessing recited at a Jewish circumcision reads: "As he has entered the covenant [of circumcision], so may he enter into Torah, the marriage canopy, and [a life of] good deeds."

with his conclusion that the notion of vicarious suffering was not to be found in Isaiah chapter 53—a concept (as I reminded him) that even the rabbis affirmed, basing it on that prophecy. His answer opened a window into his conception of faith:

> I am sorry that you cannot agree with what I wrote concerning vicarious suffering. It is true that the idea is to be found among the rabbis. But isn't this a Christian influence? In my view, the enthusiasm for this idea among Jews today is also the fruit of Christian influence. What is Jewish is the faith in justice and mercy. But the image of vicarious suffering is rooted in the image of the vengeful Greek Furies (the Erinyes) who demand satisfaction. This is something fundamentally pagan. I cannot believe that an Israelite prophet conceived of this idea.

In 1959 his commentary on the book of Joshua was published. I expected and hoped that from now on he would return to finish his major work on the history of Israelite religion. When he announced to me that he was now engaged in a commentary on the book of Judges, I asked in protest: "If you abandon *Toledot* without finishing it, who can come after you to do it as you would have done?" Kaufmann answered me (in his letter of June 12, 1960):

> I see that you, too, do not look kindly on my being occupied with a commentary on these books. Your view is indeed the view of all my friends. But I cannot agree. I do not intend to write a commentary on all of the Former Prophets. But the case of Joshua and Judges is unique. These books tell about the *beginning* of the Israelite people, and their evidence is decisive also regarding the question of the beginning of the Israelite *religion.* The prevailing criticism labored with all its might to tear down these monuments. Here we have historical narratives from before the monarchy, and the critical view did not want to acknowledge this in any way, shape or form, because this would destroy its own edifice. On a complicated question such as this, one cannot achieve anything by means of a general explanation. One must deal with every chapter and every verse. In Eissfeldt's critique of my book on Joshua, he was amazed that I do not say anything about Judges 3:2, and this is a major argument for him, and if I had written on this verse, there would have been objections based on other verses. There is need for a detailed commentary, and I am only sorry that I do not have a translator for [my commentary to] Joshua.

I did not take the hint that he offered in the last sentence.

In 1960, the abridgement of Kaufmann's *Toledot* that I had prepared was published.[4] The work of this book took four years. After I had received Kaufmann's agreement for the outline of the abridgement, he placed the

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[4] Translator's note: Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel, from Its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile,* translated and abridged by Moshe Greenberg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

work in my hands and authorized me to do as I saw best in condensing the work, adapting the later portions to the earlier, and updating it. Only years later did I realize my own presumption in doing all this. I waited impatiently for Kaufmann's reaction, and when it arrived, my mind was set at ease, despite my foreboding of expected opposition (in his letter from August 7, 1960):

> You have performed a great work, and done everything wisely, and are to be blessed for it all. I think that you are the only one who could do such a work. The luck of the book was such that you were aroused to translate it. Let us hope that this project will be crowned with success. It is understood that this book will encounter many prejudices that have been ingrained for centuries and more, within modern scholarship and before modern scholarship. And nevertheless.

A year and a half later, he summarized his reactions to the reviews and critiques that had appeared (in his letter from December 7, 1961):

> There is the positive and there is the negative. The arguments are the same arguments of criticism of the book. How is it possible that pagan Israel did not know paganism? The Christians are especially unable to make their peace with the view that Israel was not a sinful nation, a people so laden with iniquity, that they crucified Jesus and did not accept Christianity. And nevertheless.

With completion of the work of the abridged edition I was free for other assignments. After focusing for about ten years on Kaufmann's thought, I had to update myself on the state of current research. I was apprehensive about this especially with respect to methods such as Form Criticism and Tradition History, which Kaufmann had not considered at all, and on whose absence in the English version several critics had commented. My first study of them was in the writings of the epigones, the generation after [Hermann] Gunkel and [Hugo] Gressmann and I was not satisfied with them. Even the Scandinavians confused him and I expressed my bitterness to Kaufmann. As could be predicted, he supported my view while throwing barbs at some of his colleagues in Jerusalem:

> Your view concerning the doctrine from the north is absolutely correct. I spoke about this also with Professor [H. L.] Ginsberg and I said to him that it would be better if there were there [in the English volume] some section about this doctrine. This is a dead issue, but one must pay a price for fashion. He did not agree and said that one need not be sorry about the lack of such a section. I am not sure. Even the people from Jerusalem stammer about "tradition" without being able to translate the German expression [*Traditionsgeschichte*] adequately. The word associates them with the latest research, and this frees them from anxiety.

In the summer of 1962 I read the essays of Robin G. Collingwood about "historical evidence" and "the historical imagination" (in his book *The Idea of History*)[5] and I was impressed by the comparison of the historian with the detective, who relates to all the testimonies that he obtains with skepticism (why did the witness say what he said?) and reconstructs the course of events while sifting through the testimonies, rejecting one and affirming another, with absolute sovereignty according to his own judgment. This approach appeared to me to be the opposite of Kaufmann's, who conferred authority on testimonies and therefore tried to affirm them as much as possible and to link them into a continuous chain of narrative. The historian-detective of Collingwood sets himself the objective of clarifying *what actually happened,* whereas the historian-interpreter of Kaufmann has the objective of fashioning a narrative that will affirm and conflate the maximum of words of the witnesses in a credible flow—in other words, *what might have happened.* I disclosed to Kaufmann the charm that Collingwood had for me. I was going to criticize Kaufmann's position in a review of a volume of *Scripta Hierosolymitana* that included his essay on the narratives of the conquest and settlement. As preparation for writing the review I wanted to clarify for myself what was the correct approach to the testimony of the Bible. His answer to me hinted at the hubris of the historian who was ambitious to tie up all the threads (his letter of August 28, 1962):

> It is not entirely clear to me why Collingwood's arguments made such a strong impression on you. These are old matters. There is perhaps something new in the extremism of his position. In the historical narrative there is a great measure of subjectivity. But Collingwood's "detective" proposal is naïve. A historian cannot be a detective. And we know that in the judicial process they do their detective work and investigate and pass judgment—and they fail. They acquit the guilty and convict the innocent. When we pass judgment on a scholarly matter, we do not have to solve all the general questions connected with it. We must put them in brackets. The question that I deal with in *Scripta* is an empirical historical question, if one may say so. The prevailing view is that the books of the Former Prophets were written or took shape in a late period and that the Bible contains no authentic testimonies concerning ancient Israelite historical events. But in my article and in my commentary to Joshua, etc. I tried to show that this view is incorrect. The critic has fulfilled his obligation if he explains his arguments and expresses his views concerning them.

The last sentence seemed to advise me that I need not defer my review and evaluation of his essay until I had decided the larger question of whose

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[5] Translator's note: R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1946). "Historical Evidence" and "The Historical Imagination" are the titles of chapters in the last section of the book. In these chapters, he also discusses the problem of evaluating historical testimony, and brings up the analogy of the detective solving a crime.

approach to historiography was more adequate, Kaufmann's or Collingwood's.

In February, 1963 I informed Kaufmann of the intention of the University of Chicago Press to issue a new edition of my translation. In anticipation of the new edition I prepared a list of corrections, and I asked him if he wanted to add any corrections of his own. I told him also of the ripples that the new English translation of the Torah from the Jewish Publication Society of America had generated. In my reading his answer from February 27, 1963 I sensed the bodily and psychological distress caused by his illness. This letter was the last in the series of his letters to me, and it embodies well the human characteristics that I was privileged to come to know during our thirteen years of acquaintanceship through correspondence:

> Thank you for your letter. The update about the new edition of the English book is indeed good news. The corrections that you propose—send them to the publisher. I cannot come up with any, on account of the ailments that have plagued me. Right now, I am not able to do any serious studying, and this troubles me greatly. But I am confident in you, that your corrections will be fine and good.
>
> Recently I have recovered somewhat. But I still suffer from head fatigue, and this fatigue does not allow me to work. The eye doctor thinks that the fatigue comes from the eyes. He ordered me new eyeglasses. We shall see what happens. In the meantime, sustain me with pills, comfort me with vitamins. I have almost turned into a vitamin.
>
> Professor Ginsberg sent me a copy of the Torah in the new English translation. It is pleasant to read a chapter from the Bible in elegant modern English. I cannot yet read very much, but I enjoyed what I read. There will be criticism, especially in England. To them, no English can be finer than that of the King James Version. But one could expect criticism. The criticism of our traditionalists is not surprising either.
>
> I am happy that you are full of energy and working. It is not clear to me what bothers you with regard to Deuteronomy. Did you see Alt's article on Deuteronomy (*Kleine Schriften*, Part 2)? And my critique of him (in *Sefer Biram*)?[6]
>
> My financial situation has improved in the meantime. Devir stopped their payments at the close of the previous fiscal year, because I owed them 200 IL! Afterwards, it became clear that the directors of Devir and Mosad Bialik did not know that the payments had ceased. Afterwards they decided to publish a new edition of my books, but they did not bother to inform me. And so on and so on.

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[6] Translator's note: The Festschrift for Arthur Biram, *Ma'amarim b'ḥeker ha-Tanakh mugash likhvod A. Biram limelot lo shivim v-ḥamesh shana* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1956), 18–24.

I saw Professor [Ernst] Simon.[7] He told me something of the antics (*ḥokhmot*) of Joel and Rafi.[8]

Heartfelt blessings to you and all your family.

Y. Kaufmann

My letter to him for the new year 5724 (Fall, 1963) did not receive an answer.

[7] Translator's note: Ernst Simon's daughter Hanna was married to Moshe Greenberg's brother Daniel; Hanna and Daniel were co-founders of Sudbury Valley School in Framingham, MA, so when Ernst traveled to the United States to visit his daughter and grandchildren he was able to meet the Greenberg family and give a report (Sources: Hebrew Wikipedia articles on Akiva Ernst Simon, Daniel Greenberg, Sudbury Valley School; personal reminiscences of Shalom Bronstein, Ed Farber, Stephan Parnes, Avram Kogen, and Dov Peretz Elkins. The eulogy by Ernst Simon's son Uriel at Moshe Greenberg's funeral can be found at http://mikrarevivim.blogspot.com/2010/05/blog-post_30.html).

[8] Translator's note: This refers to Greenberg's sons.

II.

Kaufmann and Judaism

Is Kaufmann's *Toledot* a "Jewish" Project?

Empirical Research between Naturalism and Supernaturalism*

Job Y. JINDO

I would like to discuss Yehezkel Kaufman's monumental study of biblical religion, *Toledot ha-emunah ha-yisre'elit* (A History of the Israelite Faith, 1937–1956, henceforth *Toledot*),[1] in reference to Spinoza, in order to address one of Kaufmann's most important—yet up to now broadly overlooked—contributions to modern biblical scholarship: namely, his critical reflections on fundamental theoretical and theological assumptions.

Kaufmann's work has almost always been discussed in relation to Wellhausen, as if Kaufmann's sole objective were to offer a complete refutation of what may be termed "Christian" (or better yet, "Protestant") biblical studies—which was seen as tainted with anti-Semitic biases, notably in Wellhausen's work—and to present a corrective, or what one may call "Jewish" biblical scholarship. The biblicist Stephen Geller once noted: "It is truly meaningful only if Kaufmann is studied together with Wellhausen."[2] True, Kaufmann vehemently criticized every Christian bias he identified in biblical studies; however, this is hardly the whole story.[3]

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* I thank Shraga Bar-On, Eli Rusyn, and Shmuel Sandberg for reading and commenting on earlier drafts of this essay.

1 Only part of *Toledot* is available in English: The first three volumes, abridged and translated by Moshe Greenberg as *The Religion of Israel: From Its Beginning to the Babylonian Exile* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960); the fourth volume of *Toledot*, translated by C. W. Efroymson as *History of the Religion of Israel. Vol. 4: From the Babylonian Captivity to the End of Prophecy* (New York: Ktav, 1977).

2 Stephen A. Geller, "Wellhausen and Kaufmann," *Midstream* 31, no. 10 (1985): 39–48, esp. 39. See also David Lieber, "Yehezkel Kaufmann in Retrospect: In Tribute to Professor H. L. Ginsberg," *Proceedings of the Rabbinical Assembly* 48 (1986): 167–85; Menahem Haran, "Judaism and Bible in the World of Yehezkel Kaufmann" (in Hebrew), *Jewish Studies* 31 (1990–1991): 69–80 (an English translation of Haran's essay by Lenny Levin is included in the present volume; see pp. 147-63); John H. Hayes, "Kaufmann, Yehezkel," in *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (ed. John H. Hayes; 2 vols.; Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1999), 2:16–17.

3 As Ziony Zevit notes: "Kaufmann's work is not well known because it is densely written in modern Hebrew and hence not accessible to most scholars in the academy. T. Krapf explains the lack of attention to Kaufmann by German-speaking scholars as due, in part, to the lack of any translation of his work into German. … Moshe Greenberg's masterful abridgement and English translation … was not widely studied in critical circles, and, where read, was quickly and improperly dismissed as a conservative

What is little considered in biblical studies is Kaufmann's intellectual background, particularly that he pursued a PhD in philosophy at the University of Bern and voraciously read, then and thereafter, phenomenology, hermeneutics, and the methodology of human sciences and social studies.[4] Kaufmann never wrote about philosophy after completing his doctorate, with the exception of a short critical essay on Husserl's phenomenology.[5] However, this was not because he lost interest in philosophy or found himself not sufficiently competent in the field. Kaufmann's philosophical competency was outstanding. Walter Benjamin, one of the great European intellectuals of the 20th century, also completed his PhD around the same time under the same supervisor (Richard Herbertz). Benjamin was awarded his degree *cum laude*, whereas Kaufmann received his *summa cum laude*. For Kaufmann, however, philosophy was not an end in itself but a means to establish firm theoretical and analytical foundations for his lifework: a critical investigation into the history and essence of Jewish existence.

The question I wish to consider is the following: How do we construe Kaufmann's self-understanding of his project *Toledot*? Is Kaufmann's *Toledot*, as commonly understood, intended to be a "Jewish" project? I would like to address this question by taking into account two generally underappreciated sections in *Toledot*, where he presents in-depth theoretical discussions: one titled *Bekivshona shel ha-yetzira ha-le'umit* (The Secret of Collective Creativity; henceforth *Bekivshona*)[6] and the other being the ninth chapter of *Toledot*, conventionally referred to by the title of the first subsection *Aḥdut ve-hafshata* (Oneness and Incorporeality; henceforth *Aḥdut*).[7]

Jewish response to Wellhausianism" (Zevit, *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches* [London and New York: Continuum, 2000], 45, n. 59).

4 Kaufmann seems to have gained knowledge on his own more than from any of the instructors or courses he attended at Bern. As Emanuel Green writes: "It would seem that Kaufmann was not greatly influenced by any one teacher at Bern. It is natural that the systematic studies of the University affected the style and the philosophic method of his work, particularly the first part of Gola Ve-Nechar, but even there he remained an essentially self-educated man" (Green, "Universalism and Nationalism as Reflected in the Writings of Yehezkel Kaufmann with Special Emphasis on the Biblical Period," [Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1968], 7).

5 J. Kaufmann, " Das τρίτος ἄνθρωπος-Argument gegen die Eidos-Lehre," *Kant-Studien* 25 (1920): 214–219.

6 Kaufmann, *Toledot*, vol. 1, xxi–xliv. I render the term *le'umi*—usually translated as "national"—as "collective" because the English word "nation(al)" connotes the institutional aspect of a social group and not the collective notion of the peoplehood, which this Hebrew term evokes. Others may render it literally as "The Secret of National Creativity," as does Lenny Levin in his translation of *Bekivshona* included in this volume.

7 Kaufmann, *Toledot*, vol. 1, 221–54. Others may render the title as "Unity and Abstraction," or—as Lenny Levin puts it in the present volume—"Unity and Incorporeality." I prefer to render it as "Oneness and Abstractness," because the issue at stake is how to understand the quality of being one as in *mono*-theism—and not the state of being united or joined as a whole, which the word "unity" readily suggests. For the convention of referring to the whole discussion of *Toledot*'s ninth chapter, titled "The General Charac-

While these discussions are, for whatever reason, not included in Moshe Greenberg's English abridgment of *Toledot*, I regard them as crucial for understanding Kaufmann's project. It is for this reason that translations of both these chapters are included in the present volume.[8]

I contend that if we wish to appreciate the significance of Kaufmann's project in general and philosophical reflections in particular, we should consider him in contrast to Spinoza, rather than Wellhausen (for Wellhausen, as will be shown, is but an offshoot of Spinoza). What I wish to suggest is not a direct causal linkage (as if Kaufmann considered Spinoza to be his implicit interlocutor) but rather a conceptual and paradigmatic comparison: a heuristic horizon that can elucidate very important yet neglected dimensions of Kaufmann's *Toledot*.[9] Let me begin with a few remarks on Spinoza.

1. Preliminaries: Spinoza's Philosophy of Immanence and Modern Biblical Scholarship

Kaufmann fully accepts Spinoza's critical approach to both the Bible and tradition: the method of biblical interpretation is no different from the general method of empirical investigation; in order to understand the meaning of biblical literature, we must study its semantics (language), its pragmatics (*Sitz im Leben*), and the history of its formation and transmission (higher and lower criticism). Traditional Jewish or Christian biblical interpretation should not be accepted axiomatically; tradition, too, must be critically scru-

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teristics of the Israelite Belief" as *Aḥdut ve-hafshata*, which is actually the title of the first subsection (i.e., pp. 221–44), see, e.g., Moshe Halbertal and Avishai Margalit, *Idolatry* (trans. Naomi Goldblum; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 36 (they render the title as "Unity and Abstractness") and 258, n. 28 (referring to "pp. 221–54"). While some readers may find this convention confusing, I still find it appropriate and worth following it, for the phrase *Aḥdut ve-hafshata* "oneness and abstractness" aptly captures the thrust of that chapter.

8 See pp. 337–360 (*Bekivshona*) and pp. 283–317 (*Aḥdut*) in the present volume.

9 Spinoza is mentioned only in *Aḥdut* (not in *Bekivshona*), 223 n. 2, 248. Some may argue that Kaufmann's *Aḥdut* is better read in contrast to David Hume than to Spinoza (esp. Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* and *The Natural History of Religion*; Kaufmann mentions Hume several times in *Aḥdut*). In contrast, I see Hume as responding to, or operating within, the intellectual tradition of the immanent revolution generated by Spinoza—Hume's philosophy as a rival variety, or skeptical version, of Spinoza's basic ideas. On Spinoza and Hume, see, e.g., Richard H. Popkin, "Hume and Spinoza," *Hume Studies* 5, no. 2 (1979): 65–93; Wim Klever, "Hume Contra Spinoza?" *Hume Studies* 16, no. 2 (1990): 89–106; Wim Klever, "More about Hume's Debate to Spinoza," *Hume Studies* 19, no. 1 (1993): 55–74.

tinized.[10] Kaufmann objects to the immanent worldview and the conception of reality and divinity that underlies Spinoza's biblical interpretation.

Spinoza anticipated the age of modernity and secularization. He formulated what Yirmiyahu Yovel calls a "philosophy of immanence": a "conviction that the natural world is all there is, and that human civilization in all its aspects—knowledge, ethics, law, political legitimacy, private and social emotions, true freedom, love of God, even salvation—is derived exclusively from this world and can be attained only within it."[11] This conviction precludes *a priori* the idea of transcendence, at least, from the horizon of being and cognition.[12] If Spinoza indeed believed in God, his deity is the world itself. Further, given the absence of external doctrinal authority as the supreme arbiter of truth, this conviction regards human reason as the only available and legitimate matrix for epistemology and normativity.[13]

This immanent revolution has profoundly affected major currents of modern thought. It has evolved into multiple varieties and rival models, be they deistic, atheistic, or agnostic, and influenced directly or indirectly great minds of the west, including Kant, Goethe, Hegel, Heine, Feuerbach,

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[10] Benedictus de Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise* (ed. Jonathan I. Israel; trans. Michael Silverthorne; Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), esp. chap. 7.

[11] Yirmiyahu Yovel, *The Other Within—the Marranos: Split Identity and Emerging Modernity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 335. See also his seminal work, *Spinoza and Other Heretics* (2 vols.; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989). For Spinoza and his impact on modern Judaism, consider also Eliezer Schweid, *A History of Modern Jewish Religious Philosophy* (5 vols.; Leiden: Brill: 2011–), vol. 1, chap. 1; Joshua Parens, *Maimonides and Spinoza: Their Conflicting Views of Human Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Daniel B. Schwartz, *The First Modern Jew: Spinoza and the History of an Image* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012). More generally on modernity and secularization, consider Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2007).

[12] The immanent conviction may find transcendent questions rationally unanswerable; however, it does not necessarily make them meaningless. Rather, it may regard the idea of transcendence meaningful in serving immanent functions; hence, my phrasing "at least, from the horizon of being and cognition." See Yovel, *Spinoza and Other Heretics*, vol. 2, 174–75, esp. 175: "critical philosophy [of immanence] re-directs the transcendent drive back into the actual world, where it serves an immanent function. In Kant this takes the form of the 'regulative idea'; but seen more broadly, Nietzsche's ideas of self-overcoming and will to power also translate this notion of transcendence-within-immanence, as does Heidegger's existential analysis of man. Without overstepping his finitude, man surpasses himself into what he is not yet, that is, he projects himself into his realm of possibilities."

[13] Spinoza was not the inventor of the philosophy of immanence; rather, he was the first thinker of modernity who gave a systematic and decisive expression to this idea. As Yovel puts it: "Spinoza was not the first philosopher of immanence; pre-Socratics, Epicureans, and Stoics had preceded him in ancient times. But with Spinoza the idea of immanence, powerfully systematized, re-emerged after having been discredited and repressed by the overpowering weight of medieval Christianity" (Yovel, *Spinoza and Other Heretics*, vol. 2, 167).

Marx, Nietzsche, Darwin, Freud, Einstein, and many others.[14] Within this intellectual trajectory, critical disciplines of biblical studies are also advanced.

The philosophy of immanence is a "conviction" predicated on a certain worldview. Therefore, biblical criticism that is conducted within this intellectual tradition can be either critical or dogmatic. The latter will be the case if potential constraints within this way of thinking are overlooked. As we shall see, the heart of Kaufmann's philosophical reflections lies in his rejection of a dogmatism that considers this conviction to be axiomatic. With that in mind, let us consider Kaufmann's discussion regarding, first, common theological assumptions in *Aḥdut* and, then, common theoretical assumptions in *Bekivshona*.

2. *Oneness and Abstractness*

Kaufmann presents the discussion of *Aḥdut* at the beginning of the second book of *Toledot*, which concerns itself with the phenomenology of biblical religion.[15]

In *Aḥdut*, Kaufmann contends that biblical monotheism does not involve sophisticated abstraction—that the biblical notion of divine "oneness" (*aḥdut*) is conceived of in terms of "exaltedness" (*hasgavah*) and not in terms of "abstractness" (*hafshatah*). The abstract conception of the biblical God as void of corporeality and personality—the notion that recurs in the history of biblical interpretation (that God has no image)—is ultimately of Greek origin. Indeed, biblical texts display no qualms about describing their deity in anthropomorphic terms. As Kaufmann sees it, their very use of such images and popular forms is a proof that this notion of divine oneness is attained through intuitive and popular modes of perception.[16]

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[14] See Yovel, *Spinoza and Other Heretics*, vol. 2, in which he discusses Spinoza's impact on Kant, Hegel, Heine, Hess, Feuerbach, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud. There is a common systematic context these thinkers all share with Spinoza, which is based on three premises: "(1) immanence is the only and overall horizon of being; (2) it is equally the only source of value and normativity; and (3) absorbing this recognition into one's life is a prelude—and precondition—for whatever liberation (or emancipation) humans can attain" (Yovel, *Spinoza and Other Heretics*, vol. 2, 170).

[15] Or, the "morphology" of biblical religion, as Kaufmann himself would put it. Kaufmann follows Wilhelm Dilthey and other thinkers who undertook a comparative approach to religion/culture in order to elucidate, typologically, different patterns or structures of (religious) life and experience. See Job Y. Jindo, "Recontextualizing Kaufmann: His Empirical Conception of the Bible and its Significance in Jewish Intellectual History," *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 19 (2011): 95–129.

[16] As has long been noted, biblical prohibitions against making an image of God have little to do with the negation of God's corporeality, although conventionally it is assumed exactly in that sense. In the biblical context, it is forbidden not because it is *erroneous* (that an infinite being cannot be represented in a finite object) but because it is *inappropriate*

What is unique in biblical monotheism, according to Kaufmann, is rather the absolute transcendence of divine will—that "God is supreme over all. There is no realm above or beside him to limit his absolute sovereignty. He is utterly distinct from, and other than, the world; he is subject to no laws, no compulsions, or powers that transcend him."[17] This sheer distinction between nature and divinity should not be confused with the notion of ontological separation that deems any interaction between God and the world problematic or logically impossible. The distinction at hand should rather be understood in terms of absolute freedom: that the monotheistic deity can freely act and engage in this world and human affairs with no restriction whatsoever of the primordial nature and its causality.[18]

Kaufmann stresses that this idea of God's unlimited will—which he regards as fundamental to biblical religion—is conceivable *independently* of the notion of divine exclusivity. Concomitantly, he rejects a widely held assumption that biblical monotheism is an outcome of cultic exclusivism, a centuries-long polemic against idolatry.[19] For Kaufmann, the case is the reverse both historically and conceptually: the cultic exclusivism of biblical religion is a historical and conceptual *byproduct* of the idea of God's transcendent will, and not vice versa. True, the doctrinal aspect of biblical religion emphasizes the idea of God's exclusivity, namely, that YHWH alone must be worshiped (e.g., Exod 20:2; 23:13; Deut 4:35; 6:14; 13:3). Howev-

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(that any representation is unworthy of God and also inimical to substituting the subject for an object). What matters is not the false understanding of God's nature but rather an inappropriate attitude towards God and the fear of substitution. See Halbertal and Margalit, *Idolatry*, 37–66, esp. 45–48. Kaufmann understands those prohibitions differently. He sees in them an attempt to counter fetishism—namely, the notion that material objects can bear divine power. This notion undermines what he identifies as the fundamental idea of biblical monotheism for it blurs the basic distinction between nature and divinity. See Kaufmann, *Religion of Israel*, 17–20, 135–38, 236–37. See also Yehezkel Kaufmann, "The Bible and Mythological Polytheism," *JBL* 70 (1951): 179–97.

17 Kaufmann, *Religion of Israel*, 60.

18 Accordingly, God's involvement in the terrestrial matters (including, e.g., the Christian idea of the virginal conception of Christ) does not compromise what Kaufmann identifies as the distinctiveness of biblical monotheism, namely, the exaltedness and the absolute freedom of divinity.

19 For sophisticated explorations of this approach, consider, e.g., Stephen A. Geller, *Sacred Enigmas: Literary Religion in the Hebrew Bible* (New York/London: Routledge, 1996), chap. 9; Barbara Nevling Porter, ed., *One God or Many? Concepts of Divinity in the Ancient World* ([Chebeague, ME]: Casco Bay Assyriological Institute, 2000); Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), esp. part 3; Mark S. Smith, *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002); William G. Dever, *Did God Have a Wife? Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), esp. chap. 8; Othmar Keel, *Die Geschichte Jerusalems und die Entstehung des Monotheismus* (2 vols.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007); James K. Hoffmeier, *Akhenaten and the Origins of Monotheism* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

er, the idea of divine transcendence need not necessarily come to such an extreme conclusion. Insofar as the idea of God's absolute freedom is not compromised, biblical monotheism can acknowledge the existence of other deities (e.g., "Who is like You among the gods, O YHWH" in Exod 15:11; cf. Duet 10:17; Mic 4:5; Ps 29:1–2; 95:3; 96:4–5; 97:9).[20] In other words, for Kaufmann, what defines the essence of biblical monotheism is the qualitative (rather than the numerical) oneness of YHWH: the absolute supremacy of YHWH as one and only.[21]

This conception of divinity is radically different from pagan religions[22] that implicitly presume an "immanent" notion of divinity, where natural phenomena—such as the heaven, the earth, the sea, the sun, the wind, the mountains, and the rivers—are conceived of in terms of living persons, as personal deities.[23] As Kaufmann sees it, the abstract conception of divine

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[20] In Kaufmann's own words: "There is room in monotheism for the worship of lower divine beings—with the understanding that they belong to the suite of the One" (*Religion of Israel*, 137). Consider also Benjamin D. Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 145–74. For the distinction between the exclusivity of God and the transcendence of God, see Moshe Halbertal, "Monotheism and Violence," *Judaism and the Challenges of Modern Life* (eds. Moshe Halbertal and Donniel Hartman; New York: Continuum, 2007), 105–13. In Kaufmann's view, the idea of cultic exclusivism emerged at relatively late stages in the history of biblical religion: "[D]uring the pre-exilic period Israel was still moving from the basic monotheistic idea to its extreme cultic consequence" (*Religion of Israel*, 137). Kaufmann, thus, rejects the common conception of monotheism as inherently intolerant and violent. This common view, as is well known, goes as far back as to David Hume; see Hume, *The Natural History of Religion* (1757), sections 9 and 12. On Kaufmann and Hume, see n. 9 above.

[21] For more on this, see Jindo, "Recontextualizing Kaufmann," 114–22. For Kaufmann, the very presence of mythological motifs and images in biblical literature need not be seen as a necessary contradiction to the idea of absolute transcendence: as long as the idea of God's absolute will is not compromised, biblical monotheism can allow the use of such motifs and images. See Kaufmann, "The Bible and Mythological Polytheism," esp. 181–82. Note that the section heading of that article on page 181 should rather be rendered as "Positive and Negative Mythology [not: Idolatry]"; for the Hebrew original, see Kaufmann, *From the Secret of Biblical Creativity* (in Hebrew; ed. Menahem Haran; Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1966), 141.

[22] The word "pagan" or "paganism" in this essay is used as a non-tendentious umbrella term that designates polytheistic, animistic, and other non-biblical faiths and movements. It is not intended to evoke pejorative connotations. As far as I can tell, while Kaufmann frequently uses this term (אלילי or אלילות) he never uses it in a derogatory sense.

[23] Put differently, according to Kaufmann, divine personality for the pagan mind is a matter of style—an accident of history—whereas for the biblical mind it is a matter of content—an essence of biblical religion; cf. Yochanan Muffs, "Biblical Anthropomorphism," in *The Personhood of God: Biblical Theology, Human Faith, and the Divine Image* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2005), chap. 6. I am not suggesting that, according to Kaufmann, every biblical anthropomorphic depiction is meant literally. For example, Kaufmann will certainly take passages portraying God as a woman in labor (Isa 42:14) or a potter crafting a clay pot (Isa 45:9; Jer 18:6) to be a metaphor (or more pre-

oneness is a sophisticated version of this pagan worldview. Gradually, the pagan mindset not only unified its perception of divinity and reality but also demythologized it. What is left is nature with its impersonal laws of causality.[24] In this respect, Spinoza's pantheism, which understands God and nature as two names for the same reality that operates according to a causal system of necessity, is a peak of this gradual abstractness.[25]

In short, we have here two different conceptions of divine oneness—namely, pagan and biblical, immanent and transcendent, of abstractness or exaltedness—that involve radically different perceptions of reality. The abstract conception of divinity, though understood in terms of oneness, is fundamentally different from the oneness of the biblical God, who transcends laws of causality and necessity. The two conceptions of divinity forever remain worlds apart, each leading to a distinct perception and experience of the world and life.[26]

It is therefore evident why Kaufmann begins his analysis of biblical religion with this discussion. Indeed, we may otherwise make a category error—understanding biblical religion through "pagan" categories.[27] As I see it, there are three consequences that stem from this category mistake. First, the biblical God is abstracted into an impersonal force and thus becomes what Kaufmann calls "metadivine" or primordial causality. As a result, the theological distinction between paganism and biblical monotheism vanishes.[28] The biblical God becomes Spinozistic. Second, because of

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cisely, to be a simile, for each case involves a grammatical particle "like"). In other words, Kaufmann seems to recognize a distinction between depiction and conception: while the depiction of the biblical God may involve stylistic anthropomorphisms, the biblical conception of divinity itself—the idea of God being an agent or "divine personality"—is not a matter of style.

24 This view is anticipated by Francis M. Cornford's *From Religion to Philosophy: A Study in the Origins of Western Speculation* (London: E. Arnold, 1912), which explores religious-mythological antecedents of critical scientific thought in ancient Greece. Cornford thus stresses the essential continuity in cosmology and metaphysics between religion and philosophy in Greek culture.

25 For more on this, see Halbertal and Margalit, *Idolatry*, chap. 3, esp. 68–73.

26 See Jindo, "Recontextualizing Kaufmann," 114–22.

27 As Kaufmann himself puts it: "Yet, as if in stubborn defiance of the very nature of our evidence, biblical scholarship seeks to read it […] in the light of paganism!" (Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel*, 4).

28 According to Kaufmann, the notion of the "metadivine" realm is the essence of paganism: "The heart of the pagan idea, then, is the conception of a primordial, supradivine [= metadivine] realm which is the womb of all being, contains the roots and patterns of all nature, and out of which the gods themselves have emerged. The multitude of natural phenomena and with it the multitude of gods stem from the infinite fertility of the primordial sphere. Multiplicity is fundamental to paganism; it serves to symbolize its basic idea: the subjection of all, deity included, to a transcendent, primeval realm" (Yehezkel Kaufmann, "The Biblical Age," in *Great Ages and Ideas of the Jewish People* [ed. Leo W. Schwartz; New York: Random House, 1956], 10). See also Kaufmann, *Religion of Israel*, 21–59, esp. 23 n.; Jindo, "Recontextualizing Kaufmann," 114–15.

this abstract notion of divinity, we will misunderstand the general phenomenology of biblical religion—namely, its worldview, lived experience, and value systems, which, according to Kaufmann, are predicated on the notion of divine exaltedness. Third, we will suppose (wrongly) that the idea of monotheism can be achieved only after the human intellectual has sufficiently advanced so that highly sophisticated and abstract concepts can be contemplated. We will thus assume the historical growth of rationality and deem biblical religion to be a result of the gradual refinement and abstraction of a pagan religion. In so doing, we will misconceive the theology, phenomenology, and history of biblical religion.

As noted, modern biblical criticism is a discipline that developed within a particular intellectual tradition. If we are not aware of the hazard of applying premises and categories commonly shared in that tradition yet alien to biblical literature, we will misconstrue the conceptual universe of biblical religion and, worse yet, fail to recognize our category mistakes. The discussion of *Aḥdut* draws our attention exactly to this hazard, addressing how and how not to understand the most basic idea of biblical monotheism, namely, the oneness of its deity.

Now I wish to turn to Kaufmann's theoretical discussion in *Bekivshona*.

3. The Secret of Collective Creativity

Bekivshona is probably the single most important section in *Toledot* for understanding Kaufmann's overall project and theoretical frameworks.[29] In a way, it presents a concise digest of the concentrated theoretical discussions he presented in his magisterial historical-sociological interpretation of Jewish history, *Golah ve-nekhar* (Exile and Alienation, 1929–1930; henceforth *Golah*).[30]

In *Bekivshona*, Kaufmann seeks to determine appropriate and well-founded theoretical foundations for analyzing general phenomena of cultural creativity, be they by "Homer, Plato, Shakespeare, Goethe, Rembrandt, Beethoven, and others."[31] The discussion revolves around two issues: an "infinite variety of cultural creative forms" (הרבוי האין-סופי של צורות

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[29] *Bekivshona*, which now appears as the general introduction to *Toledot*, vol. 1, xxi–xliv, was originally published in 1941 as a reply to reviews by such scholars as Aaron Kaminka (1866–1950), Shlomo Goitein (1900–1985), and Ephraim Urbach (1912–1991) of the first volume of *Toledot*. Kaufmann himself later included this reply as the introduction to *Toledot*.

[30] See *Golah,* esp. 1:1–207. It is very likely that Kaufmann regarded *Golah* and *Toledot* as part of a single project—or, put differently, *Toledot* as an integral sequel to the discussion of *Golah*. If so, it explains why Kaufmann did not originally articulate his theoretical framework at the beginning of *Toledot*; i.e., he assumed that the readers of *Toledot* had read *Golah* and were familiar with his theoretical frameworks.

[31] Kaufmann, *Toledot*, xxiii.

היצירה התרבותית) that we can see in all spheres of human life and the "creative potential of the human mind" (הכח היוצר של רוח האדם) as an empirical category of historical experience.[32] Kaufmann contends that theoretical frameworks that do not take into account these two phenomena are inadequate.

When we look at the history of human culture, Kaufmann argues, we observe an infinite variety of creative forms in practically all spheres of human life, such as in the arts, language, law, or religion. Whether on the individual or collective level, this phenomenon, as well as its origin, cannot be explained by an artificial speculative scheme or material or social conditions alone. To account for this phenomenon, Kaufmann insists that we must assume the creative potential of the human mind as an empirical category of historical experience.[33]

Note well: For Kaufmann, the creative potential of the human mind is *not* the sole factor for the infinite variety of cultural creative forms.[34] It is

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[32] Kaufmann, *Toledot,* xxi and xxii respectively. Kaufmann uses the Hebrew term *ruaḥ* (spirit, mind) as masculine (and not as feminine, as usual) because he is using it, presumably, in the sense of the German word *Geist* (spirit, mind), which is masculine.

[33] Here, as I discussed elsewhere, Kaufmann seems to take his cue from Dilthey's work; see Jindo, "Recontextualizing Kaufmann," 106–10, 112–14. Like Dilthey, Kaufmann employs the term "mind" solely in the empirical sense and never in a metaphysical or mysterious sense, which, for him, has no real empirical existence. When Kaufmann predicates the existence of the creative spirit, he bases himself on disunity and diversity in cultural creative forms, and not, like Hegelian or romanticist thinkers, on the commonality of those forms; for more on this, see *Bekivshona*. Kaufmann thus distinguishes himself from Jewish thinkers of his period who use the term in a speculative Hegelian or romanticist sense (Aḥad Ha-ʿAm included). See Jindo, "Recontextualizing Kaufmann," 104, n. 27.

[34] This is a crucial point that differentiates Kaufmann's empirical research from Hegelian and romanticist accounts of cultural history (including Nachman Krochmal's), as Kaufmann himself explains in *Bekivshona*. Kaufmann's theoretical discussion in *Bekivshona* is very dense and, more often than not, seems to be ignored even by its academic readers. Hence, even after the publication of *Bekivshona*—and inclusion into *Toledot* as the general introduction—Kaufmann's use of the term "mind" is still occasionally misconceived as Hegelian; see, e.g., Benjamin Uffenheimer's remarks in his essay, "Ben-Gurion and the Bible" (in Hebrew), in *Ben-Gurion and the Bible: The People and Its Land* (ed. Mordechai Cogan; Beer Sheva: The Ben-Gurion University Press, 1989), 54–69, esp. 60.

Consider also Lawrence Kaplan's essay, included in this volume, which regards Kaufmann essentially as Krochmalian. I differ with Kaplan who thinks of Kaufmann as trying to minimize "any possible resemblance between his views and Krochmal's" by adding a footnote in *Toledot*, 1:12. As I see it, that footnote is intended, rather, to clarify *where*—and not *that*—Kaufmann is different from Krochmal, so that readers will not misunderstand Kaufmann's work at some crucial points. Krochmal's work seems to manifest the inherent congruity between theory and theology that I discuss in the present article. Note also that Krochmal's God, which is devoid of all personality, is, from a Kaufmannian viewpoint, not biblical but essentially Spinozistic (hence, of pagan origin). Kaufmann's objection to Hegelian and romanticist accounts of cultural history may be traced back, at least in part, to his former teacher, Simon Dubnow (1860–1941), who in-

rather one of multiple, heterogeneous factors—material and nonmaterial, which in turn influence each other—along with contingent elements that involve in the creative variety at hand. Hence, stresses Kaufmann, the empirical researcher must take this category into account.

Kaufmann thereby criticizes two dominant approaches in modern historical and biblical studies, namely, dialectic idealism and empirical materialism. Dialectic idealism, exemplified in the work of both Hegel and Wellhausen, seeks to explain the origin and history of a cultural phenomenon through a preconceived abstract paradigm, whereas empirical materialism, found in Marx and Durkheim, seeks to explain it through its physical and social settings.

Kaufmann's central criticism is the assumption of causality itself. Dialectic idealism and empirical materialism concern themselves with the world as abstracted from sensory perception and structured by the category of causality, be it metaphysical or material. In this respect, they are both Spinozistic. Each displays a deterministic temperament and seeks to explain cultural creativities through general overarching principles of causality. Thus both approaches neglect or marginalize the creative potential of the human mind, be it individual or collective. For Kaufmann, any cultural, organic phenomenon with its own internal logic and principles—such as language, law, or religion—involves this creative potential on the collective level. True, empirical investigation cannot fully account for how it works, let alone the original insight that was sparked in great minds or the spontaneity thereof.[35] Still, the human mind is a primary and fundamental category in cultural creativity, a factor equally as important as any other moment or element—social or material. Indeed, to discount this category is to ignore what constitutes defining characteristics of our humanness—that is, our diversity, spontaneity, and unpredictability.

Accordingly, not only the categories commonly applied to the analysis of biblical religion but also the very modes of thought and assumptions that underlie major trends of biblical studies turn out to be Spinozistic (hence, of "pagan" origin). Understood thus, Wellhausen's naturalistic approach—which assumes biblical religion to be a result of an organic evolution of paganism or natural religion—is but an offshoot of Spinozistic intuitions.[36]

troduced Kaufmann to a sociological study of Jewish history at the Academy of Jewish and Oriental Studies in St. Petersburg. Note also that Dubnow rejected, inter alia, metaphysical outlooks of Krochmal and other Jewish historians. Consider Laurence J. Silberstein, "Historical Sociology and Ideology: A Prolegomenon to Yehezkel Kaufmann's 'Golah v'Nekhar,'" in *Essays in Modern Jewish History: A Tribute to Ben Halpern* (eds., Frances Malino and Phyllis Cohen Albert; Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1982), 173–95, esp. 182–83.

35 See also Kaufmann, *Golah*, 1:22.

36 For Wellhausen's concept of progress and development, see Geller, "Wellhausen and Kaufmann," esp. 42–43, and also Peter Slyomovics, "Y. Kaufmann's Critique of

Granted a causal notion of cultural creativity, it is no wonder that the possibility of seeing biblical monotheism as a new beginning in human history is excluded from the outset.[37]

It comes as no surprise that Kaufmann addresses this subject in the general introduction. He must make clear from the outset that biblical studies—and major trends of historicism more generally—have not devoted due attention to the originality of cultural creation: that a cultural creation can be original or revolutionary, as a result of the creative potential of the human mind, although its function may remain beyond the limits of empirical reason.[38] Put differently, dialectic idealism and empirical materialism overlook the finitude of human reason, thereby extending beyond its competence.[39] Their rationalism is thus uncritical and dogmatic.[40]

J. Wellhausen: A Philosophical-historical Perspective" (in Hebrew), *Zion* 49 (1984): 61–92.

37 Caution: Kaufmann is not advocating a solitary notion of cultural creativity as something that can happen in a vacuum. The same holds true for the emergence of biblical religion. For him, startling resemblances that comparative scholars have identified between biblical and other ancient Near Eastern literature—such as in narrative, law, wisdom, prayer, ritual, and historiography—are only on the formal and not on the conceptual level. Indeed, to elucidate how biblical religion incorporated the literary and cultural conventions it inherited from their neighboring polytheistic cultures and transformed those conventions according to their own worldview, self-understanding, and value systems was one of Kaufmann's major objectives in his *Toledot*.

38 For more on this, see Jindo, "Recontextualizing Kaufmann," esp. 112–14, 122–27. Consider also Benjamin Sommer, "Dating Pentateuchal Texts and the Perils of Pseudo-Historicism," in *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research* (eds. Thomas Dozeman, Konrad Schmid and Baruch Schwartz; FAT 78; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 85–108, especially his comments on biblical critics' denial of the possibility of originality on 96, and on reductionism and historicism on 101–8.

39 Kaufmann elsewhere asserts that most advanced polytheistic systems display a tendency on the part of humans to be self-reliant and to believe especially in the competence of human reason. In this respect, the war of biblical religion with pagan idolatry was also a war against the self-reliant tendency and intellectual idolatry—the belief that intellectual knowledge could redeem humankind. This self-reliant tendency in paganism strikingly resonates with dialectic idealism and empirical materialism that overlook the finitude of human reason, whereas Kaufmann's critique of empirical reason markedly resembles the monotheistic critique of human intellect. Note, however, that Kaufmann's critique stems from his intellectual integrity rather than theological dogmatism. For more on this, see my article, "Recontextualizing Kaufmann," 122–27.

40 The still current view that biblical monotheism emerged as an Israelite response to the political events of the Sargonid period, especially, the ascendency of the Assyrian empire, contends Kaufmann, does not account why monotheism emerged nowhere but in Israel, while other nations and individuals underwent the same or similar political and social upheavals. Among the recent works, see Baruch A. Levine, "Assyrian Ideology and Israelite Monotheism," *In Pursuit of Meaning: Collected Studies of Baruch A. Levine* (ed. Andrew D. Gross; 2 vols.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 1:3–28. Consider Benjamin Sommer's article in the present volume, which addresses this issue at greater length.

Kaufmann's critical discussions in *Aḥdut* and *Bekivshona*, then, are inherently related: the abstract notion of divinity (theology) and the causal notion of cultural creativity (theory) can go hand in hand. Indeed, once either is predicated, it becomes very difficult not to assume the other and, worse still, to recognize the analytical constraints of their immanent worldview.

So what is the corrective alternative Kaufmann seeks to present? Is it a "Jewish" biblical criticism? I do not think so.

4. "Jewish" Biblical Criticism?

When Kaufmann published the first volume of *Toledot*, the distinguished scholar of rabbinic literature Ephraim E. Urbach (1912–91) and other Jewish scholars criticized Kaufmann for not engaging in the issue of revelation.[41] Indeed, Kaufmann does not address that subject; furthermore, he consistently avoids any use of theological concepts in discussing the inception of biblical monotheism. Hence, for example, he employs a term such as "intuition" instead of "inspiration." This way of writing, however, gave Urbach and other believing scholars the impression that Kaufmann maintains a supernaturalism while disguising it by the use of scholarly terms. In reply, Kaufmann wrote the essay, *Bekivshona*, which he later included in *Toledot* itself. There Kaufmann explicitly states his own analytical framework.[42] Kaufmann writes:

> The question of the formation of ancient Israelite culture—more specifically, of the Israelite faith—for the scholar who seeks to remain within the boundaries of appearance [i.e., the boundaries of empirical investigation] is a cultural-historical question, and it must be discussed in the way phenomena of cultural creativity are generally discussed.[43]

This shows what Urbach and other reviewers overlooked. Kaufmann's approach is not Jewish but empirical. His project offers a critical analysis of biblical religion according to the general principles of empirical investigation that are applicable to *any* cultural phenomenon. It is thus inevitable that Kaufmann cannot—and indeed need not—address such a metaphysical notion as revelation or divine existence, for empirical reason cannot penetrate into what is behind realty.[44]

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41 E. Urbach, "Neue Wege der Bibelwissenschaft," *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 82 (1938): 1–22, esp. 3–4.

42 For the inclusion of *Bekivshona* to *Toledot*, see notes 29 and 30 above.

43 Kaufmann, *Toledot*, xxxii; my translation.

44 Consider Kaufmann, *Golah*, 1:22; Kaufmann, "Biblical Age," 14; Jindo, "Recontextualizing Kaufmann," 122–27.

Accordingly, just as Kaufmann dismisses Wellhausen's naturalism, he rejects Urbach's supernaturalism. In other words, Kaufmann would reject Spinoza's worldview, and certainly Wellhausen's work, not because they are heretical or Christian but because they are uncritical and dogmatic. So, too, Kaufmann must reject Urbach's supernaturalism even if it is Jewish because it is likewise uncritical and dogmatic: Urbach's supernaturalism overlooks our epistemic limitations and thus risks invalidating the value of empirical research itself. True, Kaufmann may allow the use of rabbinic sources and traditional Jewish commentaries in biblical studies, but only if they are heuristically helpful and analytically illuminating, not because they are Jewish. Kaufmann thus accepts neither naturalism nor supernaturalism, and instead offers a critical approach that recognizes the limits of empirical reason—non-dogmatic rationalism.

To be sure, Kaufmann's work is not free of dogmatism. Suffice it to mention his (almost obsessive) notion of the people of Israel as monotheist from the earliest stages of the biblical period. But we are not addressing the end product of Kaufmann's project. Instead, we are concerned with his understanding of his project and its potential contributions. In that respect, *Toledot* was not intended to promote a "Jewish" biblical criticism.

5. Concluding Remarks

The potential constraints of analytical assumptions, when taken for granted and not explicitly acknowledged, are at the heart of the issue. If we remain unaware of such premises, we may risk misconstruing the object of analysis and, worse yet, remain unaware of our misconstrual. Furthermore, we may not realize that our analysis rests on premises that cannot be proven, or on assumptions to which we may not even subscribe.[45]

Biblical criticism can be either critical or dogmatic. In the age of modernity and secularization, an immanent approach to life and the world is generally and implicitly assumed. In such an age, Kaufmann's work remains vitally relevant. Although his philosophical reflections do not give us all the answers, they do force us to consider how to engage in biblical criticism as a modern and secular enterprise. In this regard, attention to Spinoza can highlight an important yet neglected contribution of Kaufmann's *Toledot*.

Should we conclude that *Toledot* is not meant to be a "Jewish" project? Yes and no. As we saw, Kaufmann was very strict in keeping his observa-

[45] Consider Edward L. Greenstein, *Pragmatic Pedagogy of Bible* (Initiative on Bridging Scholars and Pedagogy in Jewish Studies: Working Paper No. 2; Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Mandel Center for Studies in Jewish Education, 2006); Greenstein, *Essays on Biblical Method and Translation* (BJS 92; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989), esp. chaps. 3 and 4.

tional viewpoint empirical, not Jewish. This means that in terms of methodology, *Toledot* was not meant to be Jewish at all. In terms of consequence, however, its objective was clearly Jewish and Zionist, and that is so, not only in terms of the substance of *Toledot* but also the language in which Kaufmann wrote it.

Kaufmann wrote his major works, both *Golah* and *Toledot*, in modern Hebrew, not in German—the major language of biblical scholarship in his time, and the language in which he authored his doctoral dissertation and several articles.[46] Further, he started to write them in Hebrew before the establishment of the State of Israel and before Hebrew was recognized anywhere as an official language.[47] Like many cultural Zionists of his day, Kaufmann considered the Hebrew language to be an essential part of the Jewish collective identity, which he and his fellow Zionists sought to restore. Moreover, for them, the revival of Hebrew, a language that ceased to be spoken for two millennia, was the most vital means of restoring Jewish collective life in their original homeland.[48]

Accordingly, the fact that Kaufmann wrote in Hebrew suggests that he intended his works to be not only a Jewish but also a Zionist project.[49] In-

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[46] This is not to say that Kaufmann was not interested in publishing his works in German or other European languages. For example, he tried to publish translations of *Golah* in German, Yiddish, and English during his lifetime, but without success. See, e.g., Thomas Krapf, *Yehezkel Kaufmann: Ein Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg zur Theologie der Hebräischen Bibel* (Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum, 1990), 61.

[47] In 1914, Kaufmann published his first major article, which he wrote in Hebrew, entitled "The Judaism of Aḥad ha-Am," in *Hashiloaḥ* 30 (1914): 249–71. The British Mandate recognized Hebrew, along with English and Arabic, as an official language of Palestine in 1922.

[48] No other language has ever been revived after such a long period in which it had no native speakers. Because more than three million people now speak Modern Hebrew as their native language (and six million more speak it on other levels), we may not readily appreciate the magnitude of this collective achievement, which is as remarkable as the establishment of the State of Israel. As is well known, even Theodor Herzl (1860–1904), the major advocate of Zionism, was unable to entertain the idea of Hebrew being the language of the Jewish State he envisioned. In his words: "We cannot converse with one another in Hebrew. Who amongst us has a sufficient acquaintance with Hebrew to ask for a railway ticket in that language! Such a thing cannot be done" (Herzl, *The Jewish State* [New York: Dover, 1988], 145; translated by Sylvie d'Avigdor from *Der Judenstaat* [Vienna: M. Breitenstein, 1896]). In 1898, during his short visit to Palestine, Herzl met Eliezer Ben Yehuda (1858–1922), the driving force behind the revival of Hebrew. Herzl's diaries describe that meeting as follows: "I also met a young fanatic who tried to convince me that what our movement needs is to adopt Hebrew as our national language. It is, of course, ridiculous!" (Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, *Fulfillment of Prophecy: the Life Story of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda 1858–1922* [Charleston, SC: Booksurge, 2008], 265).

[49] Kaufmann viewed language as a crucial factor that ensures the collective identity and solidarity of a people; see Kaufmann, *Golah*, vol. 2, 108–50. In this respect, it may not be off the mark if we assume three objectives in his act of writing on scholarly issues in Hebrew; namely, (1) to help revive the Hebrew language (by introducing scholarly and technical terms to the vocabulary of modern Hebrew); (2) to promote biblical and Jew-

deed, Kaufmann himself had some serious misgivings regarding the whole idea of writing on academic issues in modern Hebrew, because his readership was undoubtedly limited and the language seemed deficient. In this regard, his former teacher H. N. Bialik wrote Kaufmann the following words of encouragement in January of 1927:

> Regardless, don't get discouraged. As for your last sentence: "In short, I see, indeed there is neither reason nor competence to write on academic issues in Hebrew," I take it as a mere slip of the pen. …. "Competence," as of now, perhaps there is indeed not, but "reason" there is, and there is and only in Hebrew. Writing about Hebrew academic issues in a foreign language is none other than feeding calves for dead pagan worship, and there is real apostasy in it. And trust me, you will not have a share among the apostates of our spirit.[50]

In addition, *Toledot* was intended to have Jewish and Zionist significance in at least two other ways: formative and informative. Formative in that *Toledot* was a project of cultural recovery. Like other cultural Zionists, Kaufmann regarded the Bible as a starting point for forming the identify of modern Jewry. Elucidating its religion and literature provided a possible identitarian bedrock for Jewish people who were then returning to their homeland from all parts of the world after two millennia.[51]

At the same time, Kaufmann's project was also meant to be informative. Like many Jewish intellectuals of his day, Kaufmann was preoccupied by the question of Jewish survival, especially the nexus between religion and the collective identity of the Jewish people. He sought to investigate this

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ish studies in Hebrew (by publishing his works as reference texts for studying the Bible and Jewish history in Hebrew); and (3) to renew the collective identity and solidarity of the Jewish people (by enabling modern Jews to engage in the study of their cultural heritage and history in Hebrew).

[50] *Letters of Hayyim Nahman Bialik* (ed. Fishel Lachower; 5 vols.; Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1937–39), 3:167–68 (in Heb.). The original Hebrew reads:

ובכל זאת אל תתיאש. את פסוקך האחרון: "בקצור, רואה אני שבאמת אין טעם ואין יכולת לכתוב דברי מדע בעברית," אני רואה רק כפליטת הקולמוס. … "יכולת" לפי שעה אולי באמת אין, אבל "טעם" יש ויש ורק בעברית. כתיבת דברי מדע עברית בלשון לועזית, אינה אלא פטום עגלים לעבודה זרה מתה, ויש בה משום שמד ממש. ומובטחני, כי אתה לא יהיה חלקך בין משמדי הרוח שלנו.

[51] Kaufmann's Zionism was more complex than usually assumed. For him, while the territorial solution to the Jewish problem was inevitable, the establishment of the Jewish state in the land of Israel—was, though ideal, not indispensable. In his view, the presence of local Arabs, who have an equal historical right to the land, must be recognized; however, the land is too small for both peoples to dwell in. Hence, he maintained that the Jews should also establish for themselves another territory in one of the unpopulated places in the world (*Golah*, 2:467–75). He writes: "A land is necessary for the people of Israel, a new land. They should hold onto the land of Israel to the extent possible, but the solution to the problem of the exile must also be sought elsewhere and perhaps in other lands" (*Golah*, 2:471). Because of this view, Kaufmann was often regarded as "non-Zionist" by his contemporaries; see Zalman Shazar, "Yehezkel Kaufmann of Blessed Memory" [in Hebrew], *Ha-Do'ar* 43, no. 4 (1963): 59–61, esp. 61.

subject according to the general principles of empirical analysis. It was especially in *Toledot* that Kaufmann explored the distinct nature of a monotheism that preserved the collective existence of the Jewish people as a distinct minority in exile for two millennia. Behind his life project was a missionary sense of intellectual responsibility and solidarity—to present a firm empirical basis informing his people as they determined their collective fate.[52]

Toward the end of his life, Kaufmann expressed his sense of responsibility and urgency as he remarked on the state of scholarship in Israel:[53]

> It also seems to me that the [Israeli] youth who study are not willing to offer a sacrifice onto the altar of biblical studies. I do not say, God forbid, that our public shows no interest in the Bible. On the contrary, there is great interest in anything related to the Book of Books. Go out and see what a large crowd fills the conferences of the Society for Biblical Studies. In the sphere of scholarly literature, however, we are lagging behind compared to other peoples. Look, we still have no critical biblical commentary [in Hebrew] that meets contemporary demands and that supplies the needs of academic youth. So far, critical commentaries have appeared only for individual books. However, we still lack a new commentary on the entire Bible for the academic youth. Isn't this a primary need?
>
> No one in Israel sacrifices himself in the tent of Torah,[54] as one may do in other fields of research. It may be that material support is required: we do not encourage and support talented people by providing stipends—for not everyone can bear the command of "Satisfy your hunger with bread dipped

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[52] This objective is more explicit in *Golah*, in which Kaufmann explores if and how religion can still serve in modern times as an "iron wall" preserving, as in the past, the collective identity of the Jews as a distinct people in exile. Religion, for Kaufmann, is not merely a matter of institutional organizations or theological doctrines but, rather, a cultural system which involves a total attitude of thought, feeling, and aspiration toward the world and life. Kaufmann's answer is decisive: religion alone can no longer assume this role in the modern era—especially in the face of a *secularization* that has begun to dominate Jewish life as well as the rise of a *modern nationalism* (especially in Europe) that has intensified the alien status of the Jews and hostility toward Jewish existence itself. Henceforth, therefore, the only logical and feasible solution to the Jewish problem is the "national redemption" (vol. 1, 8), namely, "the acquisition and settlement of a national territory" (vol. 2, 264). In turn, for Kaufmann, this national solution was a prelude to Jewish renewal and cultural recovery.

[53] Avraham H. Elhanani, *A Conversation with Authors* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: R. Mas, 1960), 86–92. This interview was conducted most likely in 1960 or 1961, as it mentions the publication of Kaufmann's commentary on Joshua (1959) and a near completion of his commentary on Judges (1962).

[54] Lit.: No one in Israel kills himself in the tent of Torah. Cf. *b. Berakhot* 63b: "From where do we learn that words of Torah are only retained by one who kills himself over it?"

in salt."[55] People study the Bible, love the Bible; however, they do not dedicate their lives to biblical studies.[56]

Kaufmann dedicated his total being to the establishment of empirical research of the Bible and Jewish history in contemporary Hebrew. This was a task he could neither complete nor evade. As a Zionist, Kaufmann thereby sought to contribute to the creation of modern Israel and to the flourishing of Jewish culture. He was an "iron ingot" that knew only one imperative: Build.[57]

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[55] Lit. "Eat Bread with salt." This statement is from *m. Avot* 6:4: "This is the way of Torah: Eat bread with salt, drink water in small measure, sleep on the ground, and live a life of privation while you toil in Torah."

[56] Elhanani, A *Conversation with Authors*, 87–88. The original Hebrew reads:
נראה לי שגם הנוער הלומד אינו מוכן להקריב קרבן על מזבח מדע המקרא. איני אומר, חלילה, שאין ציבורנו מגלה ענין בתנ"ך, אדרבה, יש ענין רב בכל הנוגע לספר הספרים. צא וראה איזה קהל גדול ממלאה כינוסי החברה לחקר המקרא. אולם בשטח הספרות המדעית אנו מפגרים לעומת עמים אחרים. ראה אין לנו עד כה פירוש מדעי לתנ"ך הראוי לדרישות הזמן והמספק צרכי הנוער האקדמי. הופיעו עתה פירושים מדעיים לספרים בודדים, אבל פירוש חדש לתנ"ך כולו בשביל הנוער האקדמי אין לנו. והלא זהו צורך ראשוני. אין אדם מישראל ממית עצמו באהלה של תורה, כשם שהוא עושה זאת בענפי מחקר אחרים. יתכן ודרושה עזרה חומרית; אין אנו מעודדים ומחזקים בעלי הכשרון על ידי מתן סטיפנדיות, שהרי לא כל אחד יכול לעמוד בצו של "פת במלח תאכל", לומדים תנ"ך, אוהבים תנ"ך, אבל אינם מקדישים חייהם למחקר התנ"ך.

[57] I differ with Thomas Krapf who attributes Kaufmann's secluded life solely to his perceived antisocial and timid personality (including Kaufmann's purchasing for his study the "most uncomfortable sofa" in a furniture store so that his visitors will not stay for long); see Krapf's essay in this volume. True, Kaufmann was shy and an introvert, but that is half the picture. As evident from Kaufmann's own remarks during the interview, the reason for his life of recluse has to do, more fundamentally, with his missionary sense of intellectual responsibility for his people. And in order to dedicate his time totally to his life work, Kaufmann minimized time spent socializing with people. In this respect, I concur with Moshe Greenberg who writes: "all of his [Kaufmann's] life's work is suffused with a devotion to his people" ("Kaufmann on the Bible: An Appreciation," in *Studies in the Bible and Jewish Thought* [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1995], 175–88, 175). While Krapf's extensive research on Kaufmann is surely to be commended, a caution is in order, as his essay does not always make a clear distinction between research-interview data and inferences based on those data. For example, it is not clear whether Krapf's depiction of Kaufmann regretting the way he spent his life and feeling it was "too late to undo his mistake" is factual or inferential, that is, if that is what Kaufmann actually said, or rather what Krapf, or one of his interviewees, inferred or speculated in light of factual data. For other biographical studies of Kaufmann, consider Emanuel Green, "Universalism and Nationalism as Reflected in the Writings of Yehezkel Kaufmann with Special Emphasis on the Biblical Period" (PhD diss., New York University, 1968), 1–26, and Avinoam Barshai's introductory essay in Yehezkel Kaufmann, *Selected Writings on Jewish Nationality and Zionism* (ed. Avinoam Barshai; [in Hebrew]; Jerusalem: World Zionist Organization, 1995), 14–117.

Yehezkel Kaufmann: Observations about his Major Ideas in the Past, Almost Present, and the Immediate Future

Ziony ZEVIT

Introduction

On April 2, 1918, Charles C. Torrey delivered the presidential address before the American Oriental Society in New Haven, Connecticut. Half-way through his presentation, he shared the following ideas with those in the room:

> I think it will hardly be denied, by those who investigate, that the atmosphere of oriental studies in the last two or three decades has not been favorable to a profound and sympathetic *interpretation* [emphasis in original] of Orientals and their work. […] A great amount of new material has come to light, and scholarly research has made very important advances in many directions; but the main tendency of the time has been to keep to the surface rather than to go deep.
>
> It has been a singularly barren time for Biblical interpretation of the first rank, for instance. The Old Testament scholarship of Europe, on which we were wont to rely, comes very near being negligible at present. Very few commentaries or other treatises of really large caliber have appeared in the present generation, and most of the output has been of distinctly poor quality. In particular, the German exegesis, which has led the way for all the rest, has been decidedly anti-Semitic, with the result which can be imagined, though it has hardly been understood. […] There has been a remarkable lack of such books as open a new door into the past, giving us a view which we feel to be true and know to be inspiring.[1]

In the following pages, I suggest that had Yehezkel Kaufmann heard these remarks, he would have agreed whole-heartedly with Torrey's criticisms and, moreover, would have considered his own work an adequate response to Torrey's hint at what was required for the redemption of biblical scholarship. Kaufmann's comprehension of his audience, however, would have been much different than what Torrey had in mind when using the pronoun "we." Kaufmann's "we" would not have been a small auditorium filled by orientalists and bibliologists, but all of the Jewish people. Kaufmann was concerned with their history in all times and places and with the content of

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[1] C. C. Torrey, "The Outlook for American Oriental Studies: The Presidential Address for 1918," *JAOS* 38 (1918): 107–20. The citation is from p. 114.

their thought-world. In that context, what he felt to be true and knew to be inspiring most likely differed significantly from what Torrey thought.

This understanding of Kaufmann informs the three somewhat related sets of observations that I present below: 1. some sources of Kaufmann's central ideas in nineteenth and early twentieth century philosophy, historiography, and nationalistic ideology, 2. the reception of his bibliological research by Jewish scholars in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, and 3. three of Kaufmann's ideas worth reconsidering for application in contemporary research on Israelite belief and religion.

1. Some Sources of Kaufmann's Major Ideas

1.1. Immanuel Kant

In the beginning was Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), who completed his doctorate in 1755. Kant's university studies included heavy doses of geography, meteorology, and anthropology. Perhaps, because of his understanding of natural sciences and their methodologies on the one hand, and his anthropology derived insights into the varieties of worlds of knowledge, Kant developed into a rationalist with a strong distaste for dogmatic beliefs. He came to understand the cosmos in terms of Newtonian physics and, in his dissertation, explained it without reference to God. After considering the material world that existed outside of and aside from humans, he concluded that this external world was comprehensible to people only through a consciousness/mind that exists within them. In the course of undertaking to present his ideas and their implications appropriately, Kant spent much of his life restructuring philosophy from the vantage point of a reflective, critical, rational individual. In 1781 he published his major and most famous work, *Critique of Pure Reason*, a book that presented his ideas about how the external material world ascertained through senses was perceived in the conscious mind. In his own words, his book was an investigation of the "faculty of reason with reference to the cognition to which it strives to attain without the aid of experience."[2]

In this work, he concluded that from the point of view of *Vernunft*, his term for referring to what may be translated into English as "rational mind (or reason)," the actual material world experienced through the senses is fundamentally unknowable in and of itself. Our knowledge about it derives indirectly through our senses (or instruments that provide information for our senses) that provide information to the mind of each individual. The mind then agglomerates these bits of information, sorting and forming them

[2] Citation from I. Kant, "Preface to the First Edition" in Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (trans. J. M. D. Meiklejohn; New York: Willey Book, 1958), 15.

first into perceptions and then into conceptions. Certain types of conceptions are organized in our minds and give rise to our knowledge of matter, that is, scientific concepts. Different types of concepts are then gathered and organized in a manner enabling humans to understand the outside world.[3]

There is, however, another world of reality about which we have knowledge whose roots are not in sensual perceptions. Kant describes how knowledge that does not come to us indirectly via our senses, and hence, in some manner, is already inherent in our minds, perceives and interprets that which is real but unconnected to the material world. Religious, ethical, and moral "truths" belong to this second category of things that people know and understand. It is this element in Kant's philosophical inquiries that finds expression later in Kaufmann's ideas about Israelite comprehensions of God and of monotheism.

By distinguishing between the two types of reality on what may be considered empirical grounds, Kant provided a philosophical basis for what are commonly understood as the hard sciences. This compelled metaphysicians to rethink the implications of realities known only through imagination.[4]

One implication of this line of thought is that religious truth-claims cannot be proven by theoretical reasoning based on experiences with or in the material world because such claims do not enter our minds through our senses. Consequently, certain religious truths cannot be overturned by philosophy and certainly not by the physical sciences that deal only with observable, measurable phenomena.

Convinced that his insight provided an Archimedean point from which certain realities could be observed objectively, Kant sounded a clarion call for intellectual emancipation in the Preface to the first edition of *Critique of Pure Reason*: "Our age is the age of criticism to which everything must be subjected. Religion through its sacredness and legislation through its authority are regarded by many as exempt from it. If exempted, however, they become subject to suspicion and cannot claim […] the respect that reason grants only to that which has stood the test of a free and public examination." The call, however, was a tad muffled because it was sounded at the end of the first footnote.[5]

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[3] Kant's philosophical conclusion has been buttressed by biologists working the field of parasitology. See D. Parrochia and P. Neuville, *Towards a General Theory of Classifications* (Basel: Basel Springer, 2013), 2. Parrochia and Neuville explain *concepts* as units of thought that have limits in that they extend only so far as to cover all objects to which the concept applies. The content of a concept consists of all the attributes of the objects (p. 33). This semantic definition, useful for classification theory, also works for their above-mentioned description of how parasites know what is good for them.

[4] Parrochia and Neuville, *Towards a General Theory*, 42–46.

[5] Kant, *Preface*, 15 n. 1. I have altered Meiklejohn's translation somewhat for the sake of clarity.

In 1797, Kant published *Metaphysics of Ethics*. He argues in this work that reason is the authority for morality. For acts to be "moral" they must flow from a sense of duty that reason dictates and from an act of will, a conscious determination, to do good or to do right. Actions that begin with adherence to the dictates of external law or social convention are not moral because they are other-directed. He contends that "good" flows only from the will of autonomous individuals, those who think and reason for themselves. A moral act derives from the "categorical imperative" of the mind to which humans respond as if their actions, were they performed universally, would enhance all human life and existence. Consequently, religious truth-claims cannot be proven by abstract notions of morality.[6]

Kant was a heavy stone in the placid pool of premodern philosophy, helping to undermine the medieval synthesis of philosophy and theology that had evolved in Europe over a millennium. Ripples of his work moved through dynamically evolving western European thought, influencing it and changing the way we talk about certain ideas permanently.[7] As a member of the interbellum Jewish intelligentsia and as a student of philosophy in a German speaking country, Kaufmann was familiar with Kant's work and with the writings of those who developed certain aspects of his thought.

1.2. Disciplines in Tandem during the Nineteenth Century

Kant's philosophy rose in popularity at the same time that other intellectual changes were occurring in the West. These changes began to define the parameters of an emerging cultural consciousness referred to today as "modernity" that claims to possess an objective understanding of reality.

Critical historiography as taught in Ranke's Berlin seminars during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, spread from Berlin across Europe and was established in both North and South America by the 1850s. In Protestant departments of Theology, scholars combined higher criticism—a discipline that had evolved in Classical Studies—with the new historical approach in their study of Bible. A generation after Kant's death, Biblical Criticism was seeding ideas in theological discourses that led to contentious theological disagreements in both Christian and (later) Jewish discourses,

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[6] In *Religion within the Limits of Pure Reason*, published in 1793 before *Metaphysics of Ethics*, Kant softened his position so as to appease state authorities and not incur the ire of church authorities who discerned some discomforting implications in *Critique*. In this book, he argued that the role of religion and of churches is not to compel morality or to judge what is or is not ethical after the fact, but rather to influence the inner-directed behavior of humans. Authentic religious organizations, he argued, are self-organized groups of people uniting to advance true morality. Consequently, scripture has value only when serving the same end. By themselves, neither scripture nor dogma can determine for people what is or is not an ethical act.

[7] This sentence is overstated because selected medieval ideas and metaphors remain vital and viable in many streams of Judaism and Christianity.

many of which remain unresolved in the first decades of the twenty-first century.[8] Kaufmann would begin his life-long engagement with biblical criticism in the early decades of the twentieth century by which time the Jewish intelligentsia had become aware of biblical criticism and its implications for challenging the historical validity of traditional narratives about the origin of biblical literature and Jewish religious thought.

Paralleling these developments, and to some extent reacting against them, was the emergence and development of Romanticism ca. 1815–1870 that gave rise to spiritualistic and mystical movements in art, literature, and religion as well as to nationalistic aspirations expressed in the rise of vernacular literatures, education focused on local, ethnic cultures, and activist political movements among suppressed ethnic groups in Eastern and Western Europe. The rediscovery of the "I" within the collective led to the rediscovery of a unique "us" by distinctive groups, including Jews, within large political units such as the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the British Empire, Greater Russia, and the Ottoman Empire. These developments enabled each group to query about and rediscover its unique *Volksgeist*.

German speaking and reading Jews began to integrate Kant's philosophy into Jewish thought only during the waning decade of the nineteenth century, continuing into the twentieth.[9] Simultaneously, other ideas were fermenting in the minds of Jewish intellectuals: Jewish Reform argued that Judaism was a deracinated religion with implicit creeds. It was in conflict with a slowly developing enlightened Orthodoxy that competed with an ill-defined anti-modernist traditionalist Judaism. These movements, in turn, were all in tension with the rising tide of Jewish national self-awareness among recently secularized Jews. Cultural Zionism advanced its vague vision of a Jewish cultural homeland, while Political Zionism countered this with its more concrete vision of a Jewish national homeland.[10] Kaufmann engaged both types of Zionist movements, disparaging the former and joining the latter.

These currents of thought paralleled renewed interest in the use of Hebrew as a language for modern communication, curiosity about the history of the Hebrew language and its literatures from the Mishnaic period through the Renaissance, and concern about the "scientific" history of the Jewish people. All such intellectual movements were nurtured by the emergence of folklore, anthropology, Comparative Religion, historical linguis-

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8 Ziony Zevit, "Dating Torah documents: From Wellhausen to Polak," in *Discourse, Dialogue and Debate in the Bible: Essays in Honour of Frank H. Polak* (ed. Athalya Brenner-Idan; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014), 258–60, 269, 274–88.

9 I develop this topic at greater length in a work in progress on the topic of Jewish Biblical Theology.

10 These centripetal ideologies were all in conflict with centrifugal ideologies such as Cosmopolitanism and Socialism that promoted the elimination of ethnic, religious, and political borders and the homogenization of humanity (understood in terms of the enlightened, urban elites of England, France, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland).

tics, and psychology (as a branch of philosophy) as scholarly disciplines. Concurrently, knowledge about and debates concerning historical-critical biblical studies were moving out from Christian seminaries into broad public awareness and debate.

1.3. First Came Kant; Then Came Hermann Cohen

Hermann Cohen (1842–1918) rose to prominence as a Neo-Kantian philosopher and was appointed professor in philosophy at the University of Marburg in 1876. (The term "Neo-Kantian" refers to philosophers and sometimes to historians and scientists who adapted Kantian issues, themes, and terminology to topics of their choosing.) His invitation to Marburg and his subsequent career thereafter were based on his application of Kantian thought to ethics. By the time of his retirement in 1912, Cohen's work was acclaimed by Christian philosophers and theologians.[11]

After leaving Marburg for Berlin in 1912, Cohen taught at the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums until his death. It was only during his Berlin period, that he turned his full attention to Judaism and its relationship to the philosophical conclusions that he had reached in his earlier, acclaimed publications on reason and ethics.[12] The major work from this last period of his life was *Religion der Vernunft aus den Quellen des Judentums*. Based on his lectures at the Hochschule, it was published posthumously in 1919. This was translated into English more than fifty years later as *Religion of Reason: Out of the Sources of Judaism*.[13] Ideas in this book influenced Kaufmann's thinking.

Cohen's title was determined by Kant's understanding of what characterized a religion of reason and by Kant's estimation that Judaism could not be reconciled with it. As Kant had put it bluntly, "The euthanasia of Judaism is the pure moral religion freed from ancient statutory teachings…"[14] Kant held that the law of Judaism created a polity, a nation, not a religion, because a religion of reason could entail only uncoerced ethical behavior, not behavior that was commanded. By Kant's definition of morality, Jews who obeyed *mitsvot*, commandments, as interpreted by the Rabbis, were immoral.[15]

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[11] While at Marburg, Cohen most likely met the distinguished historian of early Islam, Julius Wellhausen who taught there from 1885–1892 before moving on to Göttingen.

[12] Willi Goetschel, *The Discipline of Philosophy and the Invention of Modern Jewish Thought* (New York: Fordham University Press, 20013), 60–66.

[13] H. Cohen, *Religion of Reason: Out of the Sources of Judaism* (trans. S. Kaplan; New York: Frederick Ungar, 1972).

[14] Cited from M. Mack, *German Idealism and the Jew: The Inner Anti-Semitism of Philosophy and the Jewish Responses* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2003), 35.

[15] R. Munk, "Mendelssohn and Kant on Judaism," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 13 (2006): 216–17. N. Rotenstreich presents a pithy summary of Kant on this point in his *Jews and*

Cohen cited broadly from classical Jewish sources to illustrate that the idea of a unique God and of an ethical humanity as understood by Kant, originates in Jewish thought. He advanced this important idea in chapter 8, "The Discovery of Man and Fellowman," of *Religion of Reason*. A key verse that he used to illustrate this was Leviticus 19:18: "… you shall love *rēʿaka* as yourself." Although *rēaʿ* refers to a fellow Israelite in Leviticus 19:18, and is therefore usually translated "your fellow," it refers to Egyptian neighbors or acquaintances in Exodus 11:2. Cohen argued from Exodus to Leviticus that this word always referred to fellow-human beings, an understanding tolerable in most of its biblical occurrences. The sentiment of Leviticus 19:18 is repeated almost verbatim in Leviticus 19: 34 using the word *gēr*, stranger, extending the moral principle of loving others to everybody who may have been considered excluded by the first verse.[16] In Cohen's argument, Leviticus 19:18 can be considered the original articulation of Kant's idea of the categorical imperative. From this interpretation, taught by many nowadays as a truism, much followed.[17]

For Cohen, the Neo-Kantian, the concept of God's uniqueness doesn't refer to God's existence as perceived through sense perception or learned through revelation, rather, it is an idea whose existence establishes morality, harmony and ethics in all that exists. The anti-mystical Cohen explained that God's revelation to man is not a revealing of himself, but of his will with respect to how humans ought to behave to each other. Three important corollaries emerge when this idea is applied to biblical sources. The first is that the Bible must be engaged philosophically and viewed as expressing a universal philosophy in its own language and its own way.[18] The second is that Jewish people are the teachers through which humanity can be ethically improved universally; the third is that religion, absorbed in ethics, is the vehicle through which this improvement occurs.[19]

Cohen advanced a Jewish religious philosophy based on refined Kantian thought combined with Jewish ideas that distinguished itself from medieval

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German Philosophy: The Polemics of Emancipation (New York: Schocken Books, 1984), 3–5.

16 Cohen, *Religion of Reason,* 127–28. Whether or not this idea is supported by contemporary philology is questionable.

17 P. Mendes-Flohr, *Love, Accusative and Dative: Reflections on Leviticus 19:18* (The B. G. Rudolph Lectures in Judaic Studies, New Series, Lecture 4; Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2007), 7–8.

18 D. H. Weiss, *Paradox and the Prophets: Hermann Cohen and the Indirect Communication of Religion* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 4.

19 S. Kaplan, "Translator's Introduction," pp. xii–xv in Cohen, *Religion of Reason,* and L. Strauss, "Introductory Essay," pp. xxiii–xxvi, xxviii–xxix in H. Cohen, *Religion of Reason*; S. Ooko, "Mishnato ha-datit shel Hermann Cohen" (in Hebrew; "The Religious Teachings of Hermann Cohen"), in: H. Cohen, *Dat ha-tevunah mimeqorot ha-yehadut* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1971), 9–18. See Cohen, *Religion of Reason*, 236–95.

philosophical theology.[20] In his first chapter, "Die Einzigkeit Gottes" translated as "God's Uniqueness," he justified his preference for emphasizing the incomparable uniqueness of the divine rather than his oneness. For him, "Monotheism is not the thought of one man, but of the whole Jewish national spirit unfolding in the creation and development of this thought which impregnates the entire thinking of the people."[21]

In his second chapter, "Der Bilderdienst," translated as "Image Worship," Cohen argues that the distinction between worship of the unique God and various other deities is not limited to number alone: "[I]t becomes prominent in the distinction between an unseen idea and a perceptible image." Cohen could not imagine that a monotheistic mind could conceive of an image of the divine: "[P]rophetic monotheism is necessarily opposed to, necessarily contradicts art."[22]

Unlike the medievalists, Cohen sought philosophical justification for beliefs and practices using reason as his intellectual touchstone, not revelation rationalized. Additionally, he connected his Jewish religion of reason with ethics understood as a universal religious phenomenon, and he focused on actual moral, not metaphysical issues.[23] For Cohen, the Bible and Judaism were instantiations of Kant's universal vision.[24]

His comprehension of the role of reason (and of the rule of reason) in comprehending Judaism from its very beginnings affected the thought of many prominent Jewish thinkers who came of age in the first two decades of the twentieth century. After Cohen, came Leo Baeck, Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, Mordecai Kaplan, others, and Yehezkel Kaufmann.[25]

1.4. Yehezkel Kaufmann

The appropriations from Cohen made by Yehezkel Kaufmann (1889–1963) are what concern us here.[26] In what follows, I focus mainly on his claims

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20 D. Adelmann, "Ursprüngliche Differenz I: Über Gott in der Philosophie nach den Quellen des Judentums bei Hermann Cohen," in id., *"Reinige dein Denken": Über den jüdischen Hintergrund der Philosophie von Hermann Cohen* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2010), 250–68. See also 277–94.

21 Cohen, *Religion of Reason*, 36. See also 36–44.

22 Cohen, *Religion of Reason*, 51–53.

23 J. Melber, *Hermann Cohen's Philosophy of Judaism* (New York: Jonathan David Publisher, 1968), xiii–xiv. Melber's very readable and well-organized book provides a convenient ingress to Cohen's thought. For a critical evaluation of Cohen, see W. Kluback, *The Legacy of Hermann Cohen* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1968), 1–41.

24 Goetschel, *The Discipline of Philosophy*, 62.

25 Each of the named individuals appropriated selected ideas from Cohen for different audiences in different settings. This is addressed in the above-mentioned work in progress on Jewish Biblical Theology.

26 Peter Slymovics addresses what appears to be Kaufmann's partial appropriation of Cohen's ideas about history in: "Y. Kaufmann's Critique of J. Wellhausen: A Philosophical-Historical Perspective" (in Hebrew), *Zion* 49 (1984): 72–79.

about monotheism, a topic that can be broached through different disciplines: bibliology, history of religions, theology, and philosophy. Kaufmann, trained formally as a philosopher at the University of Bern, wrote a dissertation on Neo-Kantian philosophy in 1918,[27] and published a short article on Husserl's Phenomenology in *Kant-Studien* 25 (1920): 44–49. These two publications constitute the total of his formal contributions to philosophy as an academic discipline.

After 1920, Kaufmann dedicated himself to (1) exploring the defining characteristics of the habits of mind that found expression in the culture of his own people in the past and present and (2) publishing articles in various popular venues about the debated national, cultural, and political issues of the day. The best known of his "publitsistika" publications were collected and published in 1936 under the title *Beḥebley Hazeman* (In the Birth-Pangs of the Time). This book cemented his status as a formidable public intellectual in Mandatory Palestine.[28] His ability to construct tight, almost forensic, arguments buttressed by different types of data is apparent in much of his public writing. Often, the flashy rhetoric of public debate penetrated the prose of Kaufmann's later biblical research, especially when he expressed his dismissive, salty disdain for the ideas of "Wellhausen and his school."[29]

Although biblicists tend to consider Kaufmann one of their own, whether or not they agree with him, his work is easier to understand when he is viewed as a social and intellectual historian with a philosophical bent. Unlike Christian biblicists of his day, Kaufmann did not come to the field through formal training in dogmatics, systematic theology, or theological exegesis.[30] These were (and still are) all foreign to traditional Jewish education even at advanced levels. Although he had attended lectures in biblical studies while at Bern, he was essentially an autodidact who read himself into historically oriented biblical studies and other fields as well.

Kaufmann was very much interested in and wrote about the practical political thought of Marxists, Socialists, Democrats, and Anti-Semites as they related directly or tangentially to Jews and the Zionist project as he interpreted it. For him, these ideas were not theoretical. Kaufmann saw them determining the shape of Europe after World War I and understood

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27 See pp. 51–53 in this volume.

28 Y. Kaufmann, *In the Pangs of the Time: A Collection of Researches, and Articles About Questions of the Present* (in Hebrew; Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1936).

29 This may have been purposeful in that it personified a host of interrelated ideas and made it easier to caricature them on the one hand and to invest them with a negative valence on the other. On this topic, see G. Cappelli, "Modulating Attitudes via Adverbs: A Cognitive-Pragmatic Approach to the Lexicalisation of Epistemological Evaluation," in: *Studies in the Semantics of Lexical Combinatory Patterns* (ed. M. Bertuccelli Papi; Pisa: Plus Pisa University Press, 2005), 214–20. See p. 118 below.

30 Thomas Krapf, *Yehezkel Kaufmann: Ein Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg zur Theologie der Hebräischen Bibel* (Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum, 1990), 27–66.

that they could influence the future of the emerging Jewish polity in Palestine.[31] He understood also that very different sets of ideas had dynamically forged the history and thought of ancient Israelite polities in the Levant three millennia earlier.

Job Jindo writes that Kaufmann was interested primarily in philosophy as a means to establish firm theoretical and analytical foundations for his lifework, namely, a critical investigation into the history and essence of Jewish existence.[32] Joseph Turner emphasizes that Kaufmann's overlying interest was in understanding the nature of Jewish ethnicity and in tracing its sources backs to their origin.[33] Both are correct. I understand Kaufmann's history of Israel's belief—*'emunah*, not *dat*, religion—as an eight book footnote to key chapters, particularly chapter 3, 5, 6, in his first major book: *Golah ve-nekhar* (Exile and Alienation: An Historical-Sociological Study Concerning the Fate of the Jewish People from Antiquity to the Modern Period; in Hebrew; Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1929–1930; henceforth *Golah*).

Golah was intended to unravel and describe the secret of the perpetual "Jewishness" of the Jewish people throughout their history.[34] He argued that their secret was an uncompromising "monotheism" conceived as an inherently ethical, moral system of beliefs, that is, ideas and intuitions, put into practice. This book established his reputation as a philosophical historian in Mandatory Palestine alongside his reputation as a public intellectual. In *Toledot ha-emunah ha-yisre'elit miymey qedem 'ad sof bayit sheniy* (The History of Israelite Belief from Early Antiquity to the End of the Second Temple [8 books in 4 volumes; 1937–57]; henceforth *Toledot*) he undertook to provide a rock-solid foundation for the conclusions of *Golah* by tracing monotheism back to the very beginning of Jewish history.[35]

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[31] See Y. Kaufmann, *Between Paths: Chapters Researching National Thought* (in Hebrew; Haifa: The Hebrew Reali School, 1944); *Selected Writings on Jewish Nationality and Zionism, edited with an introduction by Avinoam Barshai* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1995).

[32] J. Y. Jindo, "Revisiting Kaufmann: Fundamental Problems in Modern Biblical Scholarship," *Journal of the Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions* 3 (2007) 41–42, 45, 57–65. I thank Peter Machinist for bringing this study to my attention. See also, J. Y. Jindo, "Concepts of Scripture in Yehezkel Kaufmann," in: *Jewish Conceptions of Scripture (*ed. Benjamin D. Sommer; New York: New York University Press, 2012), 232–33.

[33] Joseph Turner, "The Notion of Jewish Ethnicity in Yehezkel Kaufmann's Golah VeNekhar," *Modern Judaism* 28 (2008): 257–83.

[34] Tzvi Vislovsky, "Sefer HaDor: On Concluding the Book of Yehezkel Kaufmann, Golah VeNekhar" (in Hebrew), *Moznaim* 20 (1932): 8–11, see p. 9 and *Moznaim* 21 (1932): 11–13.

[35] My English translation of the title differs from the more common one. Hebrew *emunah* in his title refers to faith/belief/Glaube. Kaufmann's project is about describing the contents, explicit and implicit, of this belief and defending his descriptions. This is a somewhat narrower field of investigation than "religion." I recently proposed the following definition for Israelite religion: "Israelite religion consists of the varied, symbolic expressions and appropriate responses, by families, unrelated groups, and individuals, to each other and to the deities and powers known to be of major and minor practical rele-

When writing *Toledot*, Kaufmann undertook to collect and collate all relevant data that supported his argument; and, what is more important, he had to explain away all contradictory data and major contradictory arguments of which he was aware. He had to organize his facts into useful categories that could demonstrate the uniqueness of Israel's core beliefs from the very beginning of Israel's self-awareness as a people and explain how these beliefs came to expression in the daily life of Israelites as described in the Hebrew bible. *Toledot* is the fruit of Kaufmann's dedication to this encyclopedic undertaking.

Moshe Greenberg, in the first paragraph of his 1960 article, "Postulates of Biblical Criminal Law," wrote the following: "Among the chief merits of Professor Kaufmann's work must be counted the tremendous impetus it has given to the study of the postulates of biblical thought."[36] I agree with Greenberg's description of Kaufmann's contribution but only when applied to *Golah*. My reason is that by the time that Kaufmann came to apply the postulate that monotheism lies at the beginning of Israelite history, the postulate had become an *axiom*. In *Toledot*, he no longer suggested that Israelite monotheism must have existed as a matter of logical deduction from texts or of reasonable inference from the implications of texts and historical experiences. Kaufman came to consider it an *a priori*, so powerful that it sufficed to explain away contradictory evidence, particularly all that is implied from narratives about idolatry and polytheism. He no longer constructed arguments leading to a conclusion that monotheism lies at the beginning of Israelite religion, but explained why such an assumption must be correct.[37] Chapter 6 of *Golah*, "Israelite Belief and Polytheism," became the foundation stone on which Kaufmann constructed *Toledot*.

In advancing the assertion of "monotheism *ex nihilo*," Kaufmann rejected "the principle of sufficient reason." This principle holds that everything that exists has a cause and every true statement has a cause. The principle underlies almost all scientific thinking and is fundamental to historiosophy and all manners of evolutionary thought. Kaufmann's dissertation—which I have not seen—addressed problems with this principle. In ignoring it, Kaufmann implies that "monotheism" just happened, randomly, for no particular reason, to ancient Israel. It emerged as a product of the communal mind.

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vance for them within their worldview." See, "The Textual and Social Embeddedness of Israelite Family Religion: Who Were the Players? Where Were the Stages" in *Family and Household Religion: Toward a Syunthesis of Old Testament Studies, Archaeology Epigraphy, and Cultural Studies* (eds. R. Albertz, B. A. Nakhai, S. M. Olyan, and R. Schmitt; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2014), 290.

36 In *The Yehezkel Kaufmann Jubilee Volume: Studies in Bible and Jewish Religion Dedicated to Yehezkel Kaufmann on His 70th Birthday* (ed. M. Haran; Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1950), 5.

37 See G. Randolph Mayes, "Beware the Convincing Explanation," *Think* 10 (28) (Summer 2011): 17–19.

Zalman Shazar, former president of Israel, criticized Kaufmann's conceptualization of the absolutely non-evolutionary origin of Israelite monotheism by comparing it to the way that naive Jews understand "In the beginning God created." Something new came into existence where nothing had existed before.[38] Possibly Kaufmann decided on this ambiguous tactic in order to avoid addressing biblical claims concerning revelation per se. By not treating the topic in any detail, he blunted criticism of his ideas from a theological perspective.[39]

He clearly was not bothered by the problem raised by his idea of monotheism *ex nihilo*. Emanuel Green suggests that Kaufmann believed that certain great individuals, or social-political forces, or ideas are *sui generis*. They can be viewed within a context of a big picture of developments and movements, but they themselves are beyond historical explanation. They lack causative precedents in human affairs, but once present, they become causative precedents for ensuing developments.[40]

Kaufmann's insightful notion that the unique national/ethnic character and culture of ancient Israel and of Judaism through the ages until the modern period was typified by an uncompromising monotheistic worldview unable to comprehend polytheism or any form of compromised monotheism may have a second source, even earlier than Cohen, in the writings of Moses Hess (1812–1875).

Hess, a popular Jewish philosopher and historian, is considered one of the founders of Socialist Labor Zionism. In his *Rome and Jerusalem* (1862), a classical Zionist text, Hess argued that the commitment of the Jewish people to their unique religion had preserved them in their diasporas, and that Judaism has both national and universal significance. Although neither a systematic thinker nor a theologian, Hess also argued that biblical ideas about God who revealed himself in the human heart were identical with then current scientific thought about the common nature of humanity.[41] This notion is linked also to ideas of Abraham Geiger about the

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38 Z. Shazar, "Yehezkel Kaufmann z"l" (in Hebrew), *Davar*, November 15, 1964, p. 12.

39 Here, the ideas of Cohen in his chapter on "Revelation" would not have helped him since Cohen referred to biblical notions of myth, a category of literature (and thought) whose presence in the Bible Kaufmann denied. See *Religion of Reason*, 79–84. Kaufmann's acceptance of historical literary criticism implicitly read the different versions of Sinai stories as being narratives about rather than descriptions of revelation. Consequently, he may have considered "revelation" a literary theme or motif rather than a historical event. This is not clear, however, since the topic is avoided in *Toledot Ha'emuna*.

40 E. Green, "Universalism and Nationalism as Reflected in the Writings of Yehezkel Kaufmann with Special Emphasis on the Biblical Period" (PhD diss., New York University, 1968), 24–25 with a citation from *Golah*, vol. I, 22.

41 J. Heller, *Moses Hess* (London: Jewish Agency Department for Education and Culture, [no year of publication provided]) 24–29; S. Lundgren, *Moses Hess on Religion, Judaism and the Bible* (Abo, Finland: Abo Academis Förlag, 1992), 90–95, 116–20, J. Shechter, *The Land of Israel: Its Theological Dimensions* (Lanham/Boulder/New York: University Press of America, 2010), 102–3. Shechter (95–107) provides thumb-

rise of unique monotheism among Israelites. Geiger, a biblical scholar, was also the founder of the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums where Hermann Cohen taught.[42]

Unlike Hess and Geiger, Kaufmann provided a thick description for the context of this notion. He linked it, inter alia, to the sociology of Max Weber (1854–1920), who had advanced a compelling view of religion as lying at the core of a civilization and from whose writings the concept of "religious civilizations" became widespread.[43] For Kaufmann, the monotheistic belief lay at the core of Israelite and Jewish civilization and sufficed to explain why Judaism and, thereby, Jews maintained their national identity.

It is sometimes hard to discover who influenced Kaufmann. Job Jindo observes that Kaufmann did not footnote the sources with which he agreed, at least not thoroughly.[44] Possibly, he may have absorbed and assimilated the ideas of others into his own thinking without being completely aware of their origin. Some of his critics, a few of whom are mentioned below, thought less benignly about this tendency in his writings than do I. Those

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nail sketches of the best known Zionist theoreticians and their thoughts about the history of Jews in their exile and on their future return to the Land of Israel. An anthology of key sections from their major writings that address themes similar to those on which Kaufmann wrote is that of A. Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea* (New York: Miridian Press, 1960).

42 See David Ellenson, "A Zionist Reading of Abraham Geiger and His Biblical Scholarship," in *Making a Difference: Essays on the Bible and Judaism in Honor of Tamara Cohn Eskenazi* (eds. D. J. A. Clines, K. H. Richards, and J. L. Wright; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2012), 130 with additional references there.

43 Y. Kaufmann, *Golah ve-nekhar* (4 vols.; Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1929–1932), vol. 1, 30, 110–11, 152, 168–69. This is the first book in which Kaufmann articulated this idea. The notion of the monotheistic core was then carried over, more or less intact, to his studies of Israelite religion. On this, see Z. Zevit, *Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches* (London: Continuum, 2001), 44–45 and literature cited there. For the connection with Cohen (that strikes me as rather obvious), see H. Cohen, *Religion of Reason*, 20–23; 35–58 for his understanding of God, monotheism, and prophetic comprehensions of idolatry; and 361–66 in his chapter "The Law" which combines philosophy, history, sociology, and political theory. (Kaufmann obviously must be considered in opposition to Cohen's characterization of nascent Zionism as a "mistake.") This is developed further by E. Schweid, "Between a Scholar and a Philosophical Exegete" (in Hebrew), in: *Massu'ot: Studies in Kabbalistic Literature and Jewish Philosophy in Memory of Prof. Ephraim Gottlieb* (eds. M. Oron and A. Goldreich; Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1994), 414–28. See also Jindo, "Revisiting Kaufmann," 45, 68 n. 1, 69 n. 2, 75 n. 61; and "Concepts of Scripture," 233, where he refers to Wilhelm Dilthey's influence on Kaufmann's conception of the Bible as lived experience expressed in literature.
Shemaryahu Talmon compares Weber's approach to that of Kaufmann and implies clearly that a much closer connection exists than what is suggested by Kaufmann's references. See S. Talmon, "The Teachings of Yehezkel Kaufmann in Biblical Research" (in Hebrew), in: *An Evening of Conversation about the Teachings of Prof. Y. Kaufmann Concerning Biblical Research* (eds. A. Biran, B. Uffenheimer, and S. Talmon; Haifa: University Institute of Haifa/Municipal Department of Education and Culture, 1964), 19–20.

44 J. Jindo, "Recontextualizing Kaufmann," 109, notes 44, 46; see also 104, n. 27.

with whom he disagreed, however, were cited until their ideas were finally dismissed.

Another factor influencing his thinking may have been the popularity of race theory among Jewish scholars in the early twentieth century, including Zionist theoreticians, in that it combined genealogy, ethnology, ideology, the study of oral traditions, as well as history and sociology.[45] (Take note, however, that the term "race" in nineteenth- and twentieth-century anthropological parlance referred not only to biological connectedness, but also to cultural practices and habits of mind. People could and did speak about the French race, British race, and so on. So races could be characterized as intelligent, inquisitive, generous, kind, peaceful, compromising, spiritual, and open, or stupid, close-minded, greedy, militaristic, aggressive, and mean-spirited. Terminology based on the word "ethnos" began to replace that based on "race" after World War II through the 1960s as "politically correct" terminology became *de rigueur* in American academic institutions.)[46]

1.5. Kaufmann's Major and Minor General Ideas about Biblical Belief

(1) Kaufmann's argument for a pristine monotheism taught by Moses at the very beginning of Israelite religion is influenced by Cohen's demonstration that Kant's categorical imperative is already found in the Bible. The conception of divinity that provided this imperative is unattested by any ancient civilization or ancient philosophical system. The deity is 100% self-sufficient and independent of all natural forces and substance. He is the source of all and creator of all (vol. I, book 2, pp. 447–48). Kaufmann contends that the idea of monotheism in Israel cannot be explained by evolution. Under the rubric "The Essential Idea of Israelite Monotheism," Kaufmann writes: "That idea was born out of a new religious feeling, a spark of belief in God that gave rise the idea of a divine will, superior and controlling." He refers to the idea as "voluntaristic," that is, autonomous, emerging from the rational thought of an individual, thinking human, and denies that it is inherent in ideas about divinity" (vol. I, book 1, p. 244 bottom). Moreover, Kaufmann writes that it was Moses "who first thought through and conceptualized the idea of monotheism" and spread it among the tribes (vol. II, book 1, pp. 41–42).

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[45] See M. Geller, "Zionism, Race, and the Great Zionist Racialist Novel," *AJS Perspectives* (Fall, 2007): 12–14; E. Slavet, "Sigmund Freud's Racial Theory of Jewishness," *AJS Perpsectives* (Fall, 2007): 16–18.

[46] Traces of this still exist in the genres Polish Jokes, Italian Jokes, Jewish Jokes, etc., and in all manner of ethnic humor not delimited by the unstated rules of political correctness operative in contemporary Western culture. Certainly since the 1960s words such as "race, racist, racism" have an extremely negative valence.

Both Benjamin Uffenheimer, a scholar known primarily for the philosophical bent of his work on prophecy and the history of exegesis, and Menahem Haran, a scholar known primarily for his work on the history of Israelite cult and religion, observe that Kaufmann's ideas about monotheistic belief are similar to those of Cohen. Haran writes: "In his definition of monotheism, Kaufmann comes close to the neo-Kantian philosopher from Marburg, Hermann Cohen, in the first chapters of…*Religion der Vernunft aus der Quellen des Judentums*…one can find somewhat similar statements (some seeds of Kaufmann's system of comprehending Judaism are already recognizable in one of his publications from 1914)." Here, Haran implies that the relationship between the two is more typological than genetic.[47] Uffenheimer writes more bluntly: "The influence of Hermann Cohen on Kaufmann's project is absolute. However, among the many researchers and thinkers with which Kaufmann debates, there is no mention of Cohen." Uffenheimer goes on to argue that it was Cohen's thinking that influenced the young Kaufmann's general worldview vis-à-vis Judaism and that it provides the background for Kaufmann's distinctions between polytheism and monotheism.[48]

Uffenheimer's position is supported by Eliezer Schweid's short study, "Between a Scholar and a Philosophical Exegete of the Bible." Through a presentation of case studies, Schweid illustrates how Kaufmann regularly developed and expanded themes or key ideas addressed philosophically by Cohen who provided but limited discussions of the biblical texts that he used to support his analyses. Kaufmann, using collections of interpreted texts, treated the philosophically analyzed themes as implicitly underlying the texts. Thereby, he presented a very strong case that the themes were dynamically inherent in the belief system of ancient Israel.[49]

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47 Haran, *Temples and Temple Worship*, 7 n. 8. See similar remarks in Haran's article in this volume. Haran's tone in the citation seems apologetic. He refers to "somewhat similar statements" in 1914. Cohen's book, completed in 1918, was published in 1919, a year after his death; but the contents of the book were subjects of public lectures in 1913–1914. In addition, Cohen published on some of the topics that later appeared in his lectures even before his move to Berlin. See, Eva Jospe, "Introduction" in *Reason and Hope: Selections from the Jewish Writings of Hermann Cohen* (ed. E. Jospe; Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1993), 17–18 and a very partial list of Cohen's bibliography on pp. 227–29.

48 B. Uffenheimer, "Yehezkel Kaufmann, the Philosophical Historian of Israelite Belief" (in Hebrew), in: *An Evening of Conversation about the Teachings of Prof. Y. Kaufmann Concerning Biblical Research* (eds. A. Biran, B. Uffenheimer, and S. Talmon; Haifa: University Institute of Haifa/ Municipal Dept. of Education and Culture, 1964), 12–14. Uffenheimer goes on to criticize Kaufmann's refusal to acknowledge the presence of monotheistic mythology in biblical literature (pp. 14–16). In fact, there is sufficient narrative material in the Bible for a partial biography of the deity (Jack Miles, *God: A Biography* [New York: Vintage Books], 1996).

49 Schweid, "Between a Scholar," 414–18.

(2) No mythology surrounds God. He is not born; he does not die; he is not sexed; he is not part of the natural world. (This is very different from many known ancient Near Eastern stories about gods.)[50]

(3) Israelite Religion was exoteric. The bible reflects common, public, shared knowledge. Moreover, all teaching is official and authoritative. Priests are the public educators.

(4) Israelite monotheism could not comprehend idolatry or magic. At best, idols and various forms of polytheistic worship were treated as fetishes, things used in rituals that were not associated with any meaningful mythology or theology.[51]

(5) P is pre-exilic. Kaufmann argues this on the grounds that P's legislation in Num 18: 21–32 assigns tithe collection and management to the Levites, a group with no political power or theoretical authority during the exilic and post-exilic periods.[52]

(6) P predates D. Kaufmann's position vis-à-vis Pentateuchal documents is pre-Grafian. He argues this on the grounds that nowhere does P imply centralization. This idea was current by the end of the nineteenth century among conservative, Protestant biblicists who did accept some form of a documentary hypothesis, but not that of Wellhausen. Among these were Franz Delitzsch and August Dillman.[53]

(7) P's movable Tabernacle that could be set up anywhere convenient is symbolic of the *bamot* set up throughout the country. P's torah describes ritual practices at these shrines that existed before Josiah's reform based on D.

(8) All of the Pentateuch is pre-exilic as is most of the historiography in Joshua–2 Kings. There was no thorough reworking of this material in the post-exilic period.

Kaufmann's first and second points that monotheism is a unique intuition that passes from Moses to the people imply that there is no revelation per se, and no divine will. Although not developed anywhere in his writings,

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50 Kaufmann's tightly tailored definition of mythology suited his purpose, but is misleading as critics pointed out. See below. In the Bible, God talks with people, makes himself visible to them, engages in battle and the like, much like other ancient Near Eastern deities.

51 See Cohen's chapter "Image Worship," in *Religion of Reason*, 50–58.

52 Kaufmann, *Toledot*, vol. I, 143–59; *Religion*, 189–92.

53 T. C. Vriezen and A. S. van der Woude, *Ancient Israelite and Early Jewish Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 150. Dillmann divided Genesis, in his 1882 commentary, into sources A = Priestly, B = Elohist, C = Jahwist, and R(edactor) (https://archive.org/stream/genesiscritical00unkngoog#page/n20/mode/2up [viewed April 5, 2014]).

Kaufmann's Moses, the first of the prophet-teachers, is a Neo-Kantian in the manner of Hermann Cohen; sometimes, he is even Kantian.

2. Kaufmann's Reception by Jewish Scholars[54]

2.1. First Appreciations of Toledot, Volume I

Kaufmann's work was reviewed as it came out piecemeal. First, I present below some appreciations of Volume 1:

A review by *Shelomo Dov Goitein*, "Yehezkel Koifman as a Researcher of Tanakh," published in *Davar* on September 1, 1938, pp. 5–6, describes Kaufmann as well known to readers of newspapers and an important public intellectual. In his book he "destroys one by one the commonly accepted lies found among the preconceptions of *mada' hamiqra'*, Bibelwissenschaft." The review goes on to note that Kaufmann is able to bring to his research all relevant wisdom and insights found in the traditional Jewish texts.[55]

Ya'aqov David Avramaski, reviewed vol. 1 in *Haaretz*, September 27, 1938, and characterized Kaufmann's work as philosophically relevant. He wrote that the book "attracts, is filled with information and is presented properly because he is not only a researcher, but also a writer able to present facts and opinions." Avramaski observed that in the book "not all ar-

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[54] In composing the following sections, I drew on statements, references, and the like in sources available in the Kaufmann archives at the National Library of Israel, from books where I thought or recalled references to Kaufmann should be found, and from some serendipitous discoveries made while working on other projects. For the time being, I think that what I have found is representative of attitudes toward Kaufmann's ideas since no evidence to the contrary was presented in the discussion that followed my oral presentation. My list may be supplemented by working back through the bibliographies in Job Jindo's publications accessible via the Academia website: https://nyu.academia.edu/JobJindo (viewed July 7, 2017).

[55] Goitein is best known for his research on early Islam, the Jews in Yemen, and the Genizah documents. He also authored, in modern Hebrew, one book on biblical literature qua literature and a second on how to teach biblical texts to children of various ages. These reflect his recognition of the importance of teaching the Bible as literature and as a vehicle for inculcating values. The books reflect his interests in these topics from the time that he taught secondary school and then, years later, when he served as a senior inspector of educational institutions in Mandatory Palestine. When Goitein first arrived in Palestine, he taught at the Reali School in Haifa during the years 1923–28. His last year there, was Kaufmann's first year.
Goitein's last sentiment in his review was echoed in a full-page obituary, published years later in *Yediot*, October 18, 1963, p. 8, by Menahem Brosh. Brosh referred to *Toledot* as a work that "shook the foundations of biblical critics from the school of Wellhausen and established the teachings of Judaism, its thought, and comprehension of divine unity on solid, scientific foundations."

guments are complete and some are forced but the author is only in the middle of his work and the second volume will undoubtedly resolve such matters."

People familiar with historical-critical scholarship were less kind. The most trenchant and critical reviews of books 1–3 of *Toledot* that I have seen were published by *Reuven Zeligman* in *Bustnai* 9:26 (October 20, 1937): 22–25; 10:6 (June 1, 1938): 24–27; 10:24 (October 6, 1938): 23–26.[56] The first two of Zeligman's three reviews begins with praise for Kaufmann as a creative thinker, the originality and importance of Kaufmann's project, and the depth and intensity of his research. In his review of book 1, Zeligman praises Kaufmann's arguments for a pre-exilic P. He goes on, however, to reject Kaufmann's claim that Israelite religion lacked myth, an argument that he attributes to Hermann Cohen. He goes on to write "Just as I cannot understand Hermann Cohen, I cannot understand the author who follows in his footsteps."[57] Zeligman's critique focuses on the fact that Cohen portrayed Israelite religion as "a type of ethical social system. […] The prophets he turned into liberal rabbis educated in the teachings of Kant, and the deity YHWH, the zealous one, into a god who was fair, polite, and a vegetarian."

Zeligman considers Kaufmann's description of polytheism clear but finds his description of Israelite belief less so. He does not reject Kaufmann's ideas about monotheism entirely but argues that his claim about how monotheism came to be in Israel does not amount to proof. To drive this point home, he argues that if Kaufmann's claim about the origin of the idea of monotheism is true, then it must follow that the idea of polytheism must have originated similarly. Zeligman's point in advancing his *reductio ad absurdum* is that since the second proposition is commonly held to be false, the first one must be false also. Zeligman also objects to Kaufmann's frequent recourse to terms or concepts such as "primal intuition, folk religion," and "fetishes" that he left vague and undefined.

In his second and third reviews of books 2 and 3 respectively, Zeligman takes issue with Kaufmann's repeated argument that "the Bible does not know the worship of symbolic idols" by drawing attention to Exod 20:3-5,

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[56] *Bustnai* was a magazine focused on general culture as well as practical aspects of and new developments in farming. Since its target audience consisted of independent farmers and members of collectives, I doubt that Zeligman's reviews were widely circulated. Reuben Zeligman (1875–1943) was a public intellectual in pre-state Israel who wrote on literary, philosophical, and political themes for a number of newspapers and magazines. Zeligman studied at the universities of Bern and Geneva around 1900, earning a doctorate at the latter institution. See D. Tidhar, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Yishuv and Its Builders* (in Hebrew; Tel Aviv: Sifriyat Rishonim, 1957), 8:3087–88. I thank Prof. Joseph Heller of the Hebrew University for directing me to this publication.

[57] Zeligman's complaint about Cohen's lack of clarity, a feature recognized by others, is addressed in Weiss, *Paradox and the Prophets*, 6–11.

and to the expression *pesiley eloheyhem* in Deut 4:16, 7:25, and 12:3 that distinguish clearly between *elohim,* deities, and *pesel*, sculpted image that are symbolic representations.

Zeligman characterizes book 3, in his third review, as a summary of Kaufmann's research and as "a type of philosophy of history," but one that fails every time the author "tries to generalize his conclusions and establish them on a philosophical foundation." Zeligman appears to have lost patience with Kaufmann for not correcting errors of the earlier volumes and ignoring criticisms raised in reviews. He cites examples of internal contradictions where Kaufmann cites evidence in one place that contradicts his general statements elsewhere. Near the beginning of this review Zeligman writes that "the book before us […] is filled with sophistries that will attract the average Jew […] but will distance every person who is responsible philosophically and scientifically." He closes the review writing that "the book before us attests like a thousand witnesses to the measure of misrepresented facts and internal contradictions that even a thoughtful, scientific researcher such as Yehezkel Kaufmann can present when he constructs 'a city and a tower' [an allusion to the Tower of Babel story—ZZ] on *a priori* judgments and assumptions with no grounding in practical reality or healthy logic."[58]

Raphael Patai, an ethnographer and anthropologist, reviewed books 1–3 in *Haolam* 11 (1940): 625-27; and vol. 2 book 1 in *Haolam* 40 (1942): 7–8. Pattai attacks Kaufmann on details of fact, on counter-historical assumptions about the mythologies of others, and on his idea that monotheism is taken for granted in all literary creations of Israel from the beginning. More significant, however, is his critique that Kaufmann cherry picked the verses that he used as proof-texts while ignoring the fact that the verses were often composed in different times so that their literary and historical contexts differ.

Similar faults were pointed out more than a decade later by *Shmuel Avramski*, a historian of ancient Israel, in his review of Kaufmann's monograph on the conquest of the land in *Davar* on July 1, 1955. Avramski mentions that in order to support a twelfth-century BCE date for the composition of the books of Joshua and Judges and a thirteenth-century date for the events that they portray, Kaufmann ignored the Merneptah stele as well as the results of archaeology in Israel that, in the 1950s, was thought to support a twelfth-eleventh century BCE conquest. Avramski remarks that in order to support a very early date for these two books, Kaufmann brushed aside evidence for Deuteronomy's influence on their phraseology.

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[58] Kaufmann responded to one point in Zeligman's third review briefly in an essay published in 1941, reprinted as the "Introduction" to the Dvir edition of *Toledot* that I cite in this article. See vol. 1, "Introduction," xxxv and the footnote reference 2.

2.2. Gauging Receptivity Through Contemporary Torah Commentaries

The significance of Kaufmann to recent Jewish thought in general may be gauged by surveying how his ideas are accepted and used in relatively recent Torah translation-commentaries directed to different audiences: (1) non-denominational commentaries directed to the Jewish community in general; (2) commentaries directed specifically to the perceived needs of Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Jews respectively during synagogue services, and (3) in the *Jewish Study Bible* published by Oxford University Press that is directed to sophisticated Jewish and Christian readers and to the academy in general.

There are three reasons for conducting this survey: (1) The Torah is the most read and studied of all biblical books among Jews. It is generally considered the most important book of the Bible and the constitutional basis of Judaism. Consequently, I assume that individual commentators would include the best and most relevant information in a form accessible to laymen. (2) The translation-commentaries examined were all marketed heavily either to general Jewish audiences or to congregations by denomination. Therefore, they are barometers reflecting the types of knowledge that congregants (or their rabbis and representatives on synagogue boards) wanted to have and felt should be included in such a volume. Finally, (3) the commentaries differ significantly in their handling of information and insights drawn from relevant traditional Jewish sources and from general biblical studies and in the amount of space given to each. In view of this, these commentaries provide a way of determining the presence and significance of such research in contemporary Jewish thought as it is filtered in the scholar's study and distilled for the pew, or in the case of the *Jewish Study Bible*, for the classroom.

2.3. Jewish Publication Society, Nondenominational Commentaries

The Jewish Publication Society published five full-length commentaries, one on each part of the Torah.[59] All were authored by scholars of note who, although closely associated with the Jewish Theological Seminary of America where Kaufmann was lionized, taught at major secular universities. The authors wrote introductions, used footnotes sparingly in their commentaries, and composed excurses appended to the book in which they

[59] N. M. Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989); idem, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Exodus* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1991); B. A. Levine, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Leviticus* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989); J. Milgrom, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Numbers* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1990); J. H. Tigay, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Deuteronomy* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1996).

treated topics of their choice concisely, but in detail. How does Kaufmann fare in these commentaries?

Genesis, 1989: Nahum Sarna lists Kaufmann's *Toledot* in the general bibliography for Gen 34 (p. 367), refers to Greenberg's translation of Kaufmann in the bibliography for excursus 10 on "Angelology" (p. 412), and to Kaufmann's monograph *The Biblical Account of the Conquest of Palestine* in the bibliography for excursus 15 on "The Land of the Philistines" (p. 413). Nowhere does Sarna refer to Kaufmann's central ideas.

Exodus, 1991: Sarna does not refer to Kaufmann in this commentary.[60]

Leviticus, 1989: In this commentary, Baruch Levine refers only to Kaufmann's argument that Ezekiel quotes P and not that P quotes Ezekiel (p. xxix of the Introduction). Levine leaves Kaufmann out because he, Levine, did not accept any of Kaufmann's major ideas, something apparent from his other writings about the phenomenology of cult in Israelite religion.[61]

Numbers, 1990: Jacob Milgrom refers to Kaufmann a few times in his commentary, something to be expected because throughout his work on the cultic ritual, Milgrom assumed the general correctness of Kaufmann's ideas about Israelite monotheism. In this commentary, Kaufmann's ideas are integral to some of the excurses: ancient polytheists feared impurity as demonic or as derived from a meta-divine realm that could affect their gods (Excursus 49, p. 447); in all polytheistic systems gods are not sovereign but emerge from a metadivine realm (Excursus 50, p. 452); Israelite priests performed rituals in silence so as to avoid the appearance of magic that

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[60] It is possible that Sarna minimized mention of Kaufmann consciously in these books just as he had in his *Understanding Genesis* (1967), and *Exploring Exodus: The Heritage of Biblical Israel* (1986). Sarna wanted his books to be read by religious liberals and conservatives of all stripes; he may have left out anything and anybody that his imagined conservative readers might find offensive, particularly if they added nothing substantive to what Sarna wished to convey. Given the strong link between the JPS and Jewish Theological Seminary, it may have been more difficult for him to leave Kaufmann out completely from his two JPS commentaries.

[61] B. Levine, *In Pursuit of Meaning: Collected Studies of Baruch A. Levine, Volume 1: Religion* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 215–384. In his JPS commentary, Levine refuted Kaufmann's notions about the relationship between P and Ezekiel and that P preceded D (pp. xxviii–xxx) by citing H. L. Ginsberg, who was a major supporter of Kaufmann's general conclusions. Ginsberg's enthusiasm at that time is revealed in the following statement: "I am convinced that Kaufmann is absolutely right in all of his major theses about the [ideas and dating of the—ZZ] Pentateuch and earlier prophets. […] I also believe Kaufmann to be right in most of his original interpretations of the genesis and pre-exilic history of Israel (including his early dating of Psalms, Proverbs, Ruth, and, probably, Job)"; Ginsberg, "New Trends in Biblical Criticism: The Broader Historical Criticism," *Commentary* (September, 1950): 283. Ginsberg also predicted that "the regnant hypotheses of the year 1970 [twenty years after his article's publication] will surely stand incomparably closer to those of Kaufmann than to those which he combats" (p. 284). Time has proven that Ginsberg was a great scholar but a poor prophet.

combined words with gestures (Excursus 50, p. 454); Israelite prophets were not averse to citing non-Israelite compositions (Excursus 54, p. 462). Milgrom also makes a casual reference to a remark by Kaufmann in his Joshua commentary bearing on the history of Reuben in Transjordan (Excursus 70, p. 495).

Deuteronomy, 1996: Jeffrey Tigay mentions Kaufmann's idea about the Tabernacle as a symbol of the *bamot* (Intro, p. xx, note 57). He refers to Kaufmann's observations on God's hardening Pharaoh's heart (p. 32, note 50), on the status of licit and illicit images (p. 49, note 56), on fetishistic images (p. 53 note 86), on loving the *ger* (p. 108, note 59), on a problem in historical geography (p. 117, note 47), on the endowments of clergy (p. 169, note 2), on prophecy (p. 172, note 21), on asylum cities (p. 179, note 21), and on the exclusion of Moabites (p. 211 note 33 and in Excursus 21, notes 1, 9).

Of these five scholars, Tigay appears to be the one who read Kaufmann most closely and integrated him constructively into his thinking about both major and minor points in his Deuteronomy commentary.

2.4. Jewish Denominational Commentaries

Orthodox: The most popular and *de rigueur* translation-commentary used in American Orthodox congregations today is commonly referred to as the *ArtScroll Chumash.* Its editor, Nosson Scherman writes that "The new translation in this volume attempts to render the text as our Sages understood it. Where there are differing interpretations, *we* follow *Rashi*, the 'Father of Commentators,' because the study of *Chumash* has been synonymous with *Chumash-Rashi* for nine centuries."[62] Needless to say, Kaufmann is not mentioned.

Conservative: Congregations associated with the Conservative Movement in American Judaism have adopted the *Etz Hayyim Torah and Commentary*, 2001. Its main, *peshat* commentary on each book is actually abridged from the five full, book-length, commentaries published as *The Jewish Publication Society Torah Commentary* between 1989 and 1996 discussed above. *Etz Hayyim*'s approach to the Torah is characterized by David Lieber, editor of the volume, as "reverential" but "not apologetic." It does not attempt to justify all of the statements in the Torah or demonstrate that they conform to our view of scientific truth." Lieber emphasizes that the commentary uses archaeology, philology and anthropology because "we

[62] N. Scherman, ed., *The Torah: Haftaros and Five Megillos With A Commentary Anthologized From the Rabbinic Writings* (New York: Mesorah Publications, 1999). In addition to being called the "ArtScroll Chumash" after the series in which it is published, it is known also as the "Stone Chumash" after the benefactor who supported the project. The citations are from pp. xiv and xv.

see our people in the flow of time, in history, participating with the civilizations around them, yet with their very own perspective."[63]

To the extent that theological principles are discussed, Lieber describes the volume as representative of Conservative Judaism that is based on Rabbinic Judaism but differs from the latter in recognizing the Torah as "the product of generations of inspired prophets, priests, and teachers, beginning with the Time of Moses but not reaching its present form until the postexilic age, in the 6th or 5th centuries B. C. E." Furthermore, Lieber writes that "the Torah is viewed by us, in the words of Harold Kushner, as 'God's first word, not God's last.'"[64]

A comparison of the original commentaries in the JPS series and their abridged form in *Etz Hayyim* indicates that none of the historical-critical insights of the original commentaries made it into *Etz Hayyim*, consequently, neither did Kaufmann.

Of the forty-one essays by different authors appended to *Etz Hayyim*, very few are concerned with issues that might have warranted mention of Kaufmann. I identify only three discussions where authors may have considered his ideas relevant and mentioned him by name: one each on Noah v. Gilgamesh, on the idea of evolving revelation, and on the development of monotheism.[65]

Reform: In sharp contrast to the aforementioned commentaries, *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*, used in synagogues associated with the Reform Movement, presents the historical-critical approach and its theological implications in the "General Introduction to the Torah," written by W. Gunther Plaut, the volume's editor. Plaut writes: "[T]his commentary proceeds from the assumption that the Torah is a book which had its origin in the hearts and minds of the Jewish people." He acknowledges that many deny what he calls "this basic assumption," and provides a fair, thumbnail description, without polemicizing, of the notion "that the Torah is the 'word of God' given (by direct inspiration or in some other way) by God to Moses." He, however, states that his commentary proceeds on the premise that humans authored the text.[66]

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63 D. Lieber, *Etz Hayyim Torah and Commentary* (New York: The Rabbinical Assembly and the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, 2001), xix–xx. Lieber's "we" refers to individuals allying themselves with mainline views of the Conservative Movement.

64 Lieber, *Etz Hayyim*, xxi.

65 Lieber, *Etz Hayyim*, 1346–47, 1393. When I drew the attention of David Leiber to the absence of historical-critical information in the "critical" part of this commentary, he expressed surprise. He was even more surprised by the lack of attention to historical-critical matters and to the thought of Kaufmann in the many essays that form a substantial part of *Etz Hayyim*. Lieber held Kaufmann's work in high regard and considered it a major contribution to critical scholarship. See his warm appreciation in D. Lieber, "Yehezkel Kaufmann's Contribution to Biblical Scholarship," *Journal of Jewish Education* 34 (1964): 254–61.

66 W. Gunther Plaut, *The Torah: A Modern Commentary* (ed. David E. Stein; rev. ed.; New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 2005), xxxvii.

Plaut assumes the general validity of the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis but tempers its conclusions about the post-exilic dating of P with insights from Kaufmann. Plaut concludes that the composition and redaction of the Torah extended from 950 through 450 BCE.[67]

Greenberg's translation-abridgement of Kaufmann is cited with reference to Abraham's intuition of monotheism in a homiletic discussion of Gen 12 (p. 103, note 44), on the name Beth El, Gen 28:19 (p. 196 note 2), and finally in a homiletic comment that the Patriarchs had glimpses of God's essence but Moses brings it into full view when he reveals the name YHWH (p. 394, note 16 [a footnote reference within footnote 2]).

2.5. A Nondenominational Academic Commentary

The Jewish Study Bible, 2003, is unlike the aforementioned commentaries in that it is intended for use in higher education and in homes, not synagogues. As such, it owes its allegiance to the academy and its standards, not to any particular branch of Judaism. Additionally, commentators were directed to write academically responsible and appropriate short commentaries on the book that they were assigned that would be useful to all students of the Bible. Perforce, this necessitated including the historical-critical approach to the Torah with its implications for understanding and interpreting other books. [68]

The "Jewishness" of this volume is reflected in that commentators, following editorial instructions, emphasized the Hebrew (and not a reconstructed form of the) text, paid extra attention to passages that have influenced post-biblical and modern Jewish practices, and drew attention to passages or stories relevant to public discourse in contemporary Jewish communities. Its major expression, however, lies in the fact that commentators took cognizance of and drew from traditional Jewish interpreters, particularly those who were philologically sophisticated and literarily alert, "thereby placing themselves in the larger context of Jewish exegesis."[69]

Where is Kaufmann to be found in *The Jewish Study Bible*?

In his "Introduction to Leviticus," Baruch Schwartz considers P "the product of learned scribes of the Jerusalemite priesthood of the last centu-

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67 Plaut, *The Torah*, xl–xlii.

68 I include this volume because *The Jewish Study Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003) has become popular among some Jews as their preferred translation-commentary for the weekly Torah portion when they study it at home. Those that brought this information to my attention, for the first time in 2008–9, were both college students and adults who attend services regularly at Orthodox and Conservative synagogues, and almost all were introduced to the volume in college or continuing education courses.

69 A. Berlin and M. Z. Brettler, "Introduction: What is 'The Jewish Study Bible'?" in *Jewish Study Bible*, x. In the spirit of full disclosure, I mention that I contributed the critical notes bearing on 1 and 2 Kings to this volume.

ries of the Judean kingdom." By implication, he sees H as having originated during the same period since both were combined before the exile of 586.[70] This particular dating reflects Kaufmann's positions about pre-exilic P combined with Schwartz' own research over many years. Kaufmann, however, is not mentioned by name.

He is mentioned by name in S. David Sperling's essay, "Modern Jewish Interpretation," at the end of the bible. Sperling provides a thumbnail sketch of Kaufmann's views about Wellhausen's conclusions, of Kaufmann's own documentary hypothesis, and his ideas about monotheism. Sperling mentions him again when describing Menahem Haran's work on cult and the dating of P.[71]

In an essay, "The Bible in Israeli Life," Uri Simon, a major proponent of reading the Bible as fine literature, comments with some disdain on the Hebrew *Encyclopaedia Miqrait*, one of the best such scholarly undertakings of this genre. He complains: "[T]he editors' understanding of *peshat* was so one-sided that the ancient authors would probably have been amazed at the extraordinary emphasis on realia, archaeology, and the world of the ancient Near East, and the utter neglect of theological, ideological, and literary aspects (as evident, for example, in the almost complete disregard for the writing of the Israeli scholars Yehezkel Kaufmann and Martin Buber)."[72]

In a fine essay on "The Religion of the Bible," Stephen Geller mentions Kaufmann alongside Albright as one of many scholars who argued that archaeology was continuous with the textual portrayal of the contents of Israelite religion.[73] As the essay unfolds, it is clear that Geller does not accept Kaufmann's positions on monotheism, fetishism, mythology, or his ideas about the lack of change in the content of Israelite religion.

On the basis of this admittedly brief and incomplete survey, I extrapolate—with only a small amount of trepidation—that the miniscule number of references and allusions to Kaufmann's publications or ideas in the works that I examined indicates that most contemporary Jewish scholars consider much of his work irrelevant to their own, even when they write on topics that he addressed.[74] There is, perhaps, one field in bibliology where his ideas remain potent.

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70 *Jewish Study Bible*, 205.
71 *Jewish Study Bible*, 1913–14, 1916.
72 *Jewish Study Bible*, 1994.
73 *Jewish Study Bible*, 2027.
74 In the animated discussion that followed my oral presentation at the University of Bern on June 10, 2014, my interlocutors, who believe that Kaufmann's influence and importance is much broader and pervasive than I concluded, faulted the narrowness of my survey and, more significantly, observed that I was drawing a large conclusion based on silence. They were and are correct with regard to the narrowness of my survey. At that time, however, they were unable to suggest the name of a major scholar or a publication that was a strong proponent of Kaufmann's work or theorizing that I had not mentioned.

2.6. Kaufmann in Jewish Theological Scholarship

The discussions involving Kaufmann that I have found may be divided into two: those in which Kaufmann's ideas are addressed seriously and presented as relevant to the topic under investigation; and those in which his ideas are mentioned succinctly or alluded to, and then dismissed. The three scholars in whose work I find Kaufmann engaged as a discussion partner are Yohanan Muffs, Jon Levenson, and Benjamin Sommer. All write on theologically focused topics.

Yohanan Muffs embraces some of Kaufmann's insights but combines them artfully with insights from Abraham Joshua Heschel and traditional homiletic midrash in a poetic book: *The Personhood of God,* 2005. For example, he concludes a brief discussion, "Law and Ritual in Mesopotamia and in Israel," as follows: "[T]o paraphrase Kaufmann, sacrifice is not needed by God but is given to man as a gift, a way for him to enjoy a modicum of divine intimacy. To overstate the case: in Mesopotamia, ritual is a divine need, law a human one. In Israel, law is a divine need, ritual a human one."[75]

Elsewhere, Muffs, in a discussion of "Power, Love and Justice: The Positive Expressions of the Divine Will," refers to Kaufmann as "the metaphysician of divine power," observing that Kaufmann illustrated that in Israelite conception there is no metadivine realm; hence, God cannot be restrained by it in any way. Nothing in the cosmos restrains God so that he has absolute power. Muffs observes that Kaufmann did not ask why the biblical God was just or why he loved humanity; but, Muffs argues, extending Kaufmann's ideas, that without power there could be no love or no justice.[76]

His book includes a small chapter, "Family and Nation: Two Versions of National Formation," in which he compares JE and P stories about the emergence of Israel as a unique ethnos and the revelation of the name YHWH. In this chapter, Muffs reconciles differences between the two narratives on the basis of Kaufmann's ideas about the formation of the Israelite people in the pre-conquest period so that he can derive normative theological insights.[77] The result is characteristically up-beat Muffsian theology. But for Muffs to write such theology, it was necessary to draw Kaufmann's

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I countered with a query: Why would scholars who believe Kaufmann irrelevant bother to refer to him, if only to refute him? Their response was that to some extent Kaufmann's ideas have become so embedded in the DNA of scholarship that they are taken for granted. The veracity of this response remains to be demonstrated.

75 Y. Muffs, *The Personhood of God: Biblical Theology, Human Faith and the Divine Image* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2005), 38–39.

76 Muffs, *Personhood*, pp. 83–85, and 89–94. In this particular chapter, he combines insights from A. J. Heschel, Y. Kaufmann, and E. A. Speiser, but the dominant flavor of the chapter is Heschel.

77 Muffs, *Personhood*, 45–51.

writings into theological discussions of the type that Kaufmann studiously avoided.

Jon D. Levenson, in *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 1988, refers to Kaufmann as "one of the greatest of Jewish biblical scholars of modern times" and explains that what he, Levenson, refers to as the "mastery" of YHWH over the cosmos is what Kaufmann referred to as the "basic idea of Israelite religion." At the beginning of his book, he disagrees with Kaufmann over the interpretation of Ps 82 and contends against Kaufmann that God's absolute sovereignty is not an absolute given in the Hebrew Bible: "[I]t lacks the solidity and fixity that Kaufmann tried to assign to it."[78]

Throughout this book, Levenson engages Kaufmann, now agreeing and now disagreeing with him. Levenson argues that Kaufmann's ideas emerge fully only in those parts of the Bible that are expressions of the covenantal relationship, in P from the sixth century BCE and in second and third Isaiah.[79]

Benjamin D. Sommer refers to Kaufmann over twenty times in his *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel*, 2009. In chapter 1 of this book, Sommer writes: "[Y]ehezkel Kaufman, the greatest and most influential Jewish biblical scholar of modern times, describes the Hebrew Bible's conception of God as at once spiritual and anthropomorphic: the Biblical God, Kaufman maintains, has a form but not material substance." Sommer then goes on to qualify Kaufmann's claim and illustrate that it is only partially correct.[80] In an Appendix, "Monotheism and Polytheism in Ancient Israel," he places Kaufmann's core ideas, corrected, modified, but still recognizable, at the center of his own evolving ideas. This appendix functions as an efficient introduction to Kaufmann's idea of Israelite monotheism, his rejection of "henotheism" as a descriptor of Israelite religion, and to Kaufmann's understanding of Israel's conception of God.[81] Sommer, like Muffs and Levenson, assumes that some of Kaufmann's views remain an important part of the contemporary discourse about biblical thought.

Other scholars made less use of Kaufmann though they mentioned him.

H. L. Ginsberg refers to Kaufmann as one whose work anticipated many of the conclusions reached by European and American scholars in the 1960s: disillusionment with Wellhausen and a methodology that kept discovering redactors; and an interest in ancient Near Eastern mythology and its influence, or lack thereof, on Israelite religion. Ginsberg also suggested that the

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78 J. D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1988), 4, 6–10, 47.

79 Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 120–27, 131–39.

80 B. D. Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 2.

81 Sommer, *Bodies of God,* 165–71.

trend in new scholarship was moving in a direction that would eventually intersect with Kaufmann's positions on the early date of P and of JE, as well as on his notion that Deuteronomy was not written under the influence of prophets. He writes that Kaufmann cannot be considered a Jewish conservative, but a competent biblicist who, using scientific methods independently, removed the intellectual shame from historical biblical studies by correcting what had gone wrong in the nineteenth century.[82]

Moshe Greenberg, in the "Acknowledgments" section of the first volume of his incomplete commentary to Ezekiel, 1983, thanks Kaufmann who "embodied a passionate commitment to grand ideas, combining the philosopher's power of analysis and generalization with the attention to detail of the philological exegete." Greenberg acknowledges that Kaufmann's remarks on Ezekiel in *Toledot* (vol. III, 483-526 or *Religion*, 426-46) fill his commentary.[83] And indeed, that is the case.

Menahem Haran, a student of Kaufmann, presupposes the pre-exilic dating of P because data from P accord best with other data bearing on the history of priests, Levites, and the development of the history of Israelite religion. In his *Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel*, he argues, however, contra Kaufmann, that P in the Pentateuch was the inspiration or catalyst for the cultic reform of Hezekiah, a reform that did not last. He dismisses Kaufmann's comprehension of P's tabernacle as symbolic of the *bamot*. In fact, I cannot find any mention of Kaufmann or his work on such key issues when Haran treats them other than in a note in the Prologue. He writes: "[K]aufmann argues that P preceded D, but his reasoning here, for the most part is unconvincing. […] In dating P, I am prepared […] to concur with Kaufmann's view not more than in some degree, and not exactly for his own reasons."[84]

Israel Knohl, a student of Greenberg, writes in *The Sanctuary of Silence*, 1995, that Kaufmann was the first to point to the unique phenomenon of the silence of the Priestly cult, which he adeptly entitled "the Sanctuary of Silence" (in *Toledot*, vol. II, 476–77). Knohl, however, rejects Kaufmann's

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82 "Yehezkel Kaufmann as a Biblical Scholar" (in Hebrew), *Bitzaron* 49 (1963): 88–93, see pp. 91–93. In a similar vein, Shemaryahu Talmon sees Kaufmann's main contributions in his opposition to the excesses of German scholarship, in his pre-exilic dating of P, and with many question marks, his axiom of an unchanging, ever-present, Israelite monotheism. His criticisms reject Kaufmann's *a priori* rejection of foreign influences on Israelite religious thought and behavior, his avoidance of any methodology that incorporated change and adaptation to new situations, and his mocking dismissals of ideas with which he did not agree. "The Teachings of Yehezkel Kaufmann in Biblical Research" (in Hebrew), *Ha-universitah*, 1966, 26–30.

83 M. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20* (AB, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), ix.

84 M. Haran, *Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel: an Inquiry into Biblical Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1985 [originally, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977]), 7 n. 8; p. 11 n. 12.

explanation that the silence expresses a rejection of polytheistic magical functions and mythological explanations for cult. He writes politely, "I believe that this explanation is not sustained by criticism." Knohl then goes on to qualify the "silence" in the sanctuary, distinguishing between what priests did and what others did. According to P, priests performed in silence—as Ps 65:2 states, *leka dummiyah tehillah*, for your benefit, silence is praise—while others might pray, recite psalms, and sing.[85]

In his discussion of Priestly Torah's attitude to popular religion and its institutions, Knohl again begins with Kaufmann's idea about the image of God in popular worship, and then qualifies Kaufmann's idea about the homogeneity of ideas in ancient Israel, by pointing to conflicting notions in Priestly Torah and popular conceptions.[86] Essentially, Knohl argues that Kaufmann overstated his case and that the textual evidence is best explained by the historical development of ideas.[87]

Richard Elliot Friedman writes extensively on the documentary hypothesis. In *Who Wrote the Bible?* Friedman mentions Kaufmann in one footnote on a trivial matter of whether or not passages in *Numbers* containing the expression "babies will become prey" (Num 14:3, 31) that occurs in Deut 1:39 also should be assigned to P.[88] In an earlier book, however, Friedman summarized Kaufmann's views on pre-exilic P and its relationship to D, supplementing them with supporting data from more recent research.[89]

I conclude this survey with comments made about Kaufmann in his presence before he died and with comments from an obituary. Both writers knew him well professionally.

Isaac Leo Seeligmann, wrote a "Preface" for the *Yehezkel Kaufmann Jubilee Volume,* 1960.[90] In it, Seeligmann observes that even before writing *Golah*, Kaufmann had worked out and published his critique against the hypotheses of Wellhausen and Kuenen (p. x). After listing the major ideas of *Toledot* and pointing out that Kaufmann went to great pains to prove every point that he made in detail, Seeligmann muses: "And still, there is place to ask, will all of Kaufmann's conclusions withstand criticism?"

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85 I. Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1995), 148–49.

86 Knohl, *Sanctuary of Silence*, 157–74.

87 Knohl presents his own, contra-Kaufmannian understanding of Israelite faith in *Biblical Belief: The Borders of Biblical Revolution* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2007).

88 R. E. Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987) 273 n. 7.

89 R. E. Friedman, *The Exile and Biblical Narrative* (HSM 22; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), 45, and see pp. 68–69 for a more extensive discussion of the "babies will become prey" passages mentioned in the preceding note.

90 "Preface" in *Yehezkel Kaufmann Jubilee Volume: Studies in Bible and Jewish Religion Dedicated to Yehezkel Kaufmann on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* (ed. M. Haran; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1960).

Seeligmann observes that Kaufmann expressed great confidence in the objective correctness of his conclusions; but then he comments that even one who does not share all of Kaufmann's certainties will appreciate the majesty of his undertaking, will accept many of his ideas, and will be influenced by him (p. xi).

A close reading of Seeligmann's "Preface" reveals that Seeligmann praises the man more than the work, and the effort more than the achievement.

Benjamin Mazar published an obituary in *Haaretz* on January 17, 1964 (p. 11): "It should be said that even one not willing to accept the teachings of Kaufmann as a whole, or one who rejects in some measure his fundamental assumption, or one who distances himself from his various other assumptions such as the antiquity of Leviticus, his views about the patriarchs, his description of the conquest of the land, and even his evaluation of the prophets, will find in his monumental book a full treasure of brilliant ideas."

Reading what is writ large between the lines, Mazar declares that Kaufmann's conclusions, in Mazar's terminology "assumptions," concerning topics about which Mazar, a leading archaeologist and historian of ancient Israel knows something, were incorrect. He leaves little of importance to be evaluated positively among the remaining "brilliant ideas."

The generally poor reception of Kaufmann's work among Jewish biblicists since the 1960s despite Greenberg's translation-abridgement undertaken to "spread the word" is understandable. Kaufmann's project, consisting of *Golah* and *Toledot*, was conceived in the 1920s, and executed piecemeal over many decades beginning in the twenties. It began by fighting Wellhausen—a stand-in for all who employed higher-critical methods to reach conclusions which Kaufmann intuited were incorrect—passionately when such a fight was still of interest to some; but it continued long after mainstream biblical scholarship had reached a consensus that higher critical methodology was valid even when different scholars reached different conclusions about the revealed sources. Kaufmann remained uninterested in and largely uninformed by developments in the bibliology after World War II in both Europe and the United States. As a result, *Toledot* did not engage in any meaningful manner with new developments in archeology, history, and historiography regularly reported in the *Bulletin of the American Schools for Oriental Research, The Biblical Archaeologist*, and *The Journal of Biblical Literature*, as well as in Hebrew publications including newspapers.[91] Simply put, Kaufmann's work, besides various faults that its

[91] The fact that it was written in Hebrew and, thereby, directed primarily, if not exclusively, to a Jewish audience, suggests to me that Kaufmann intended his work to be accessible to a sophisticated, popular audience. He did not intend to direct it to critical scholars in and out of the university, nor did he write regularly for professional journals in Euro-

early critics mentioned in reviews, appeared to be, and was indeed, old fashioned. It is not, however, irrelevant.

3. Three Ideas Worth Reconsidering

Despite their convoluted origins and despite problems inherent in the way they were presented originally, some of Kaufmann's ideas are worth reconsidering in the light of recent developments in biblical studies and other fields and of ongoing discussions in ancient Near Eastern religion.[92]

3.1. Pre-exilic P

Kaufmann's major argument for pre-exilic P is his rhetorical question: who in the powerful priesthood of the Second Temple period would have assigned control over the major tithe, ten per-cent of gross national produce to powerless Levites and why would he have done so? Since the common-sense answer to his question is that nobody would have done so, the implication of the answer is that P must have come into existence when Levites were a powerful class politically and economically, during the First Temple period. This common-sense answer has never been refuted by researchers who date P to the post-exilic period. But, Kaufmann's question, answer, and its implication do not constitute a proof that his claim about the dating of P's composition is correct.

In recent decades, however, linguistic evidence evaluated with the standard methodologies employed in Historical Linguistics has established the veracity of Kaufmann's position.[93] In so far as the linguistic arguments are absolutely unrelated to the literary, ideological, and historical arguments advanced by Kaufmann, they can be said to provide external, independent, objective corroboration for his dating. This raises the intriguing question bearing on how and why P evolved in its pre-exilic context and what it meant.[94]

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pean languages engaging in the ongoing, scholarly discourse of the nineteen forties and fifties.

92 See essays published in B. N. Porter, ed., *What Is a God? Anthropomorphic and Non-Anthropomorphic Aspects of Deity in Ancient Mesopotamia* (Winona Lake, IN: The Casco Bay Assyriological Institute, 2009); B. Pongratz-Leisten, ed., *Reconsidering the Concept of Revolutionary Monotheism* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011).

93 See essays in C. Miller-Naudé and Z. Zevit, eds., *Diachrony in Biblical Hebrew* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012) and the rich bibliography that they provide.

94 See preliminary suggestions on legislation bearing on the place of worship that is denominated "pre-P" and "pre-D" in Z. Zevit, "The Textual and Social Embeddedness of Israelite Family Religion" in *Family and Household Religion: Toward a Synthesis of Old Testament Studies, Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Cultural Studies* (eds. R. Albertz, B. A. Nakhai, S. M. Olyan, R. Schmitt; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2014), 304–9.

3.2. The rapid dissemination of the idea of ex nihilo *monotheism*

Kaufmann's *ex-nihilo* monotheism argument can be supported, not proven, employing a concept from evolutionary biology: punctuated equilibrium. Historians prefer gradualist explanations and are most comfortable talking about the slow evolution and incubation of ideas; occasionally, however, new, innovative ideas do occasionally come, as if in a flash, to the mind of a single individual and spread widely through his efforts within that person's lifetime. History provides many examples in the areas of religion, politics, science, and even the humanities: Islam, Protestantism (in its Lutheran, Zwinglian, and Calvinist formulations), Hasidism, National Socialism, Einstein's theory of special relativity, and even Wellhausen's formulation of the documentary hypothesis.

In so far as Kaufmann's judgment about the spread of monotheism in Israel within a single generation and its deep-rootedness in the Israelite psyche thereafter is paralleled, his general contention cannot be deemed impossible on the grounds that it is unparalleled. The question is only whether his claim can be demonstrated to be true, or in more Popperian formulation, whether it can be falsified.

Such a demonstration, however, must first contend with a significant semantic problem. In contemporary History of Religions and Bibliology, "monotheism" is problematic in that there is no consensus as to what exactly it refers. Historians of religion apply it to different religions and to a variety of elements within them. In biblical research it has become a type of buzz-word with a fuzzy range of meanings pertaining to singleness, unity, uniqueness, YHWH-aloneness, and authoritative dominance. Researchers define it using some mix of these semantic elements in *ad hoc* ways so that monotheism can mean whatever a particular author wants it to mean.[95] Kaufmann used "monotheism" with a sense that had become popular in the late eighteenth-early nineteenth century, to refer to what was considered the most evolved, progressive form of religious belief, in contrast to what was considered the lowest form, fetishism. Some better definition and demarcation of the nature of monotheism is desiderated before the implications of Kaufmann's position in some recast formulation can be proposed for twenty-first century applications.

3.3. Wide-spread monotheism

Kaufmann's contention that all of Israel was monotheistic, in the sense that all Israel worshipped a single deity, is contradicted by many biblical texts and is not supported by historical and archaeological research.[96] It is preferable to argue, following Christine Hayes in lecture 2 of her online Yale

[95] A.-J. Herbener, "On the Term 'Monotheism'," *Numen* 60 (2013): 617, 619, 626.
[96] Zevit, *Religions of Ancient Israel*, chapters 3, 5, 6, 7.

course, *Introduction to the Old Testament***,** that what Kaufmann posited for all of Israel throughout the Iron Age was true only for some of Israel.[97] She suggests that in biblical texts, it is discernable primarily in the writings of those who framed, presented, and issued qualitative judgments about Israel's cultic behavior during the Iron Age.[98] This allows that Kaufmann was partially correct but overly aggressive when generalizing from the limited data that he used, when dismissing contradictory texts, and when ignoring contradictory conclusions of scholars who worked with different types of data.

Hayes' thoughtful insight combined with new ideas about the importance of ancient scribalism in the production of literature now in the Bible suggests that Kaufmann's ideas, corrected and refined—tweaked, if you will—have an important role to play in twenty-first century studies of Israelite religion in general, not only Israelite belief.[99] And, if contemporary scholars choose to reject his ideas on grounds that they consider solid, they are obligated to refute them vigorously and robustly.

Reconsidered in the light of new developments in bibliology, some key ideas in Kaufmann's *Toledot*, completed more than fifty years ago, may still have the power to—here I paraphrase Charles C. Torrey whom I cited in the first page of this study—open a new door into the past by providing insights that, if not true, then at least, are helpful for new research. The ideas, however, require an investment of thought-equity and reworking by new scholars freed from old orthodoxies.

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97 Cf. the article of Israel Knohl in this volume.

98 Christine Hayes, "Introduction to the Old Testament—Lecture 2. The Hebrew Bible in Its Ancient Near Eastern Setting: Biblical Religion in Context." Online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wRPqtGywkCw&index=2&list=PLh9mgdi4rNeyuvTEbD-Ei0JdMUujXfyWi (viewed April 21, 2017). Hayes' position, even in the course of her oral presentation in Lecture 2 but also in other lectures within the series, is more nuanced than my simple presentation suggests. See also, Christine Hayes, *Introduction to the Bible* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2015), 15–26.

99 W. M. Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became A Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 35–138; D. M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 111–73; K. van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 75–108.

Yehezkel Kaufmann, R. Nachman Krochmal, and the "Anxiety of Influence"

Lawrence KAPLAN

Moreh Nevukhe ha-Zeman (*Guide of the Perplexed of the Time*) [henceforth: *MNZ*], the massive and exceptionally wide-ranging, posthumously published and unfinished magnum opus of the leader of the Galician Jewish enlightenment (*Haskalah*), Nachman Krochmal (1785–1840), is a major contribution to both modern Jewish thought and *Wissenschaft des Judentums*.[1] Indeed, in its combination of philosophical speculation and historical investigation the work is unique.

While *MNZ* was neglected in Jewish Enlightenment circles in Western Europe, the work exerted a major, if often unacknowledged, influence in Eastern Europe among the proponents of both the Haskalah and the Jewish National revival; there it was lauded as a modern classic. Solomon Schechter, in his sensitively and vigorously written study of Krochmal,[2] famously "assert[s] with the utmost confidence that there is scarcely a single page in Krochmal's book that did not afterwards give birth to some essay or monograph or even elaborate treatise, though their authors were not always very careful about mentioning the source of their inspiration." But if many authors "were not always very careful" about acknowledging Krochmal's influence on their work, what are we to make of an outstanding thinker and scholar who explicitly and at length goes out of his way to, if not deny, at the very least minimize such influence?

In "Le-ḥeker toledot ha-emunah ha-yisre'elit"[3] ("On the Study of the History of the Israelite Faith"), the first chapter of his great multi-volume work of biblical scholarship *Toledot ha-emunah ha-yisre'elit* (A History of the Israelite Faith, 1937–1956, henceforth *Toledot*), Yehezkel Kaufmann has, as one would expect, standard, generally very brief footnotes referring either to biblical texts or to the critical German biblical scholarship of his

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1 *Moreh Nebukhe ha-Zeman*, edited and with an Introduction ("She'arim le-emunah tzerufah" ["Gates to the Refined Faith"]) by Yehoyada Amir (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2010) (originally published posthumously by Leopold Zunz in Lemberg in 1851). (Page numbers in parentheses in the text refer to this edition of *MNZ*.)

2 Solomon Schechter, "Nachman Krochmal and the 'Perplexities of the Time'," in *Studies in Judaism: First Series* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1896), 46–72. The quotation is from p. 67.

3 Yehezkel Kaufmann, *Toledot ha-emunah ha-yisre'elit* (Tel Aviv: Bialik and Dvir, 1967), 1:1–22. The three books of this volume first appeared separately in 1937.

day.[4] Suddenly, at the very conclusion of the four page section of this chapter entitled "Ha-hitgalut ha-rishonit shel emunat ha-aḥdut" ("The Original Appearance of the Monotheistic Faith"), the key section where Kaufmann sets forth the fundamental theses of his entire work,[5] he inserts a very lengthy, actually one-page-long footnote, completely out of proportion in terms of length to any of the other footnotes in the chapter.[6] In it Kaufmann explains that while in a certain respect his views resemble those of Krochmal's *MNZ*, "precisely on account of that similarity it would perhaps be proper to take note of certain fundamental differences." He thereupon proceeds for another 28 lines to elaborate on those "fundamental differences." It would seem that whatever initial hesitations Kaufmann may have had in writing this note—"it would perhaps be proper to take note"—he successfully overcame them. No "perhaps" about it! If I might rather crudely paraphrase the import of this note: Kaufmann here, at the beginning of *Toledot*, which, unlike almost all the critical biblical scholarship of his day, was written in Hebrew and not in German, addressed his Hebrew readers, many of whom were familiar with *MNZ*, and adjured them: "Don't confuse me with Krochmal!"

This paper will consist primarily of a close reading and interrogation of that extended note. I will, however, also draw upon Kaufmann's unfortunately little known essay "Le-birur torato shel R. Nachman Krochmal" ("Towards a Clarification of the Teaching of R. Nachman Krochmal")[7] in order to supplement the rather brief descriptions of Krochmal's views contained in the note. Negatively, I shall argue that two of the supposed "fundamental differences" allegedly distinguishing him from Krochmal, to which Kaufmann points in his note, stem from his simply misreading certain of Krochmal's most fundamental views. Flowing from that negative argument, I shall conclude positively that Kaufmann was far closer to

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4 There are a total of twentytwo notes.

5 Kaufmann, *Toledot*, 1:9–12.

6 Kaufmann, *Toledot*, 1:12–13, n. 12.

7 "Le-birur torato shel R. Nachman Krochmal," *Likuttei Ranak* (A Krochmal Anthology; ed. Yehezkel Kaufmann; Haifa: Beit Sefer Reali, 1950), 5–20. It would appear that the fact that this essay appeared as the introduction to an anthology of Krochmal's writings that was part of a series of high school texts (*Sifrei mofet le-batei sefer*) has been responsible for its having been overlooked by all Krochmal scholars. To my knowledge, it has never been cited in any scholarly article on Krochmal's thought, and it also is not listed in Amir's "Selected Bibliography" appended to his Carmel edition of *MNZ* (41–44). This is unfortunate. While the article is of a popular nature, not surprising given its high school audience, it is a serious and thoughtful essay—students of the Reali High School were quite clearly a very sophisticated lot—and, as everything written by Kaufmann, is deserving of attention. Moreover, it is the only place where Kaufmann devotes sustained attention to Krochmal's thought. In his essays and his great work *Golah venekhar* (Exile and Alienation, 1929–1930; henceforth *Golah*) we find only scattered references to and comments on Krochmal's writings.

Krochmal than he would have us believe.[8] My conclusions raise the question as to why Kaufmann felt it necessary to minimize the resemblance between his views and Krochmal's, which question I will attempt to answer towards the end of this essay, if necessarily somewhat speculatively.

In this section of this chapter, Kaufmann sets forth the fundamental theses of his entire work. First he denies, contrary to the prevalent biblical scholarship of his day, that biblical monotheism was the product of a struggle with paganism and the end result of a gradual evolutionary development. Rather, biblical religion from the very outset was monotheistic and non-mythological. At the root of biblical religion was a revolutionary idea, a fundamental idea rooted in a popular national culture, the idea of a single, unique, non-mythological God. This idea was not philosophical and abstract in nature; certainly biblical religion had no idea of God's incorporeality. Rather it was a product of a vision, a fundamental intuition, which took its shape through the human creative spirit (*ruaḥ*) that manifests itself both on an individual and a collective level. Israelite religion thus was the original creation of the people of Israel.

According to Kaufmann, there *was* a gradual evolutionary development in the biblical period, but it was not a development *from* paganism *to* monotheism, but an evolutionary development within monotheism itself. This monotheistic idea shaped all the other aspects of the people's life and its creativity and fashioned for itself symbols in legend, law, prophecy, historiography, and ritual. Indeed, even many post-biblical phenomena, such as religious conversion, late Jewish Apocalyptic, and personal reward and punishment, were created against the background of and were the unfolding of the potentialities contained within this basic and primal idea—*ha-idea ha-rishonit*—of the non-mythical God.

Let us now turn to Kaufmann's footnote.

First Kaufmann, as indicated above, notes that his view resembles Krochmal's in a certain respect.

> R. Nachman Krochmal (in *Moreh nevukhe ha-zeman*), following in the wake of Hegel, understood the development of the Israelite faith as an organic development of a cultural-metaphysical idea. In this respect his teaching resembles the view presented here. But precisely on account of that similarity it would perhaps be proper to take note of certain fundamental differences.

By linking Krochmal to Hegel, Kaufmann already prepares the ground for dismissing his views as cultural-metaphysical, as opposed to cultural-empirical. Without denying Hegel's influence on Krochmal, we should note

[8] See, however, my essay's conclusion, where I discuss certain differences between Krochmal and Kaufmann that Kaufmann does not refer to in his note.

that the latter's views regarding the organic development of human culture as deriving from or an expression of "spirit" are equally indebted to such non-metaphysical thinkers as Lessing, Herder, and Vico.[9]

Kaufmann then enumerates three "fundamental differences." First:

> Krochmal's teaching is a Hegelian philosophical midrash on the Jewish tradition, which he accepts (particularly with regard to all that pertains to the era of the Torah and the prophets) in the form it is found in the historical tradition in all its details, even, at times not refraining from grafting on to it *aggadot* of the Sages. His midrash thus completely lacks any historical-critical foundation.

Note again the implicitly dismissive reference to Hegel, which will become a leitmotif in this footnote. With respect to the criticism itself, it is on the whole well taken, and one should grant that, at least for the early phases of biblical history, Krochmal's retelling of that history in chapter 8 of *MNZ* sticks fairly close to the biblical account. But, even here, Krochmal's account is not as traditionalist as Kaufmann would have it. Scholars have pointed to hints of Pentateuchal criticism in *MNZ*.[10] Building on this scholarship, I hope to show elsewhere that Krochmal hinted that the Torah is a composite, post-Mosaic work, edited in its present form in the period of the early kingship, and reflecting the views of different schools, particularly the schools of priests, Levites, and prophets founded by Samuel the prophet.[11]

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9 See Jay Harris, *Nachman Krochmal: Guiding the Perplexed of the Modern Age* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1991), 125: "A scholarly dispute has arisen as to which of various thinkers—Lessing, Herder, Vico, or Hegel—was the primary influence on Krochmal's approach [to history]… [But] the fact that competent scholars can find elements of all these thinkers in Krochmal's work suggests that… Krochmal was not overly interested in resolving the distinctions among these thinkers, but rather in pursuing a response to their common elements." Note, though that in *Golah*, 1:167, n. 2, Kaufmann groups Krochmal together with Lessing and Herder, among other thinkers.

10 See Menahem Diman, "Rimzei bikkoret ha-torah be-sifro shel Ranak" ("Hints of Pentateuchal Criticism in Krochmal's Book"), *Tarbiz* 18 (1947): 59–61. Both Avraham Greenbaum and Harris reject Diman's claim, but they do not address any of his main arguments, which I, for one, find convincing. See Greenbaum, "Bikkoret ha-miqra be-mishnat Ranak: ʿiyyunim" ("Studies in Biblical Criticism in Krochmal's Thought") in *Hagut u-ma'aseh: sefer zikkaron le-Shimon Rawidowicz* (Thought and Deed: Memorial Volume for Simon Rawidowicz; eds. Avraham Greenbaum and Alfred Ivry; Haifa: Haifa University Press, 1983), 101–5; and Harris, *Nachman Krochmal*, 196, n. 24.

11 While this, of course, is not the place to present my arguments, which I will develop in considerable detail in a future article, let me briefly say that they are based on Krochmal's description in chapter 8 of the activity of Samuel the prophet, particularly his establishing schools of priests, Levites, and prophets (*MNZ*, 45–46), his comparison in chapter 9 of Ezra's activity to that of Samuel (in explicit contrast with the rabbinic comparison of Ezra and Moses) (*MNZ*, 56), and his long note in chapter 13 linking certain passages in the Pentateuch with certain First Temple groups, groups strikingly similar to the schools established by Samuel (*MNZ*, 192, n.**).

My argument, granted, is speculative, but one thing is clear: In chapter 8 Krochmal speaks only in the most general terms about God giving the Israelites when they left Egypt "righteous and comprehensive laws and statutes" (*ḥukkim u-mishpatim tzadikim ve-kollelim*)—note the addition of the word *kollelim* "comprehensive" to the biblical phrase—and does not refer to God's giving the Torah as we have it to Moses.[12] Indeed, as is the case with the Passover Haggadah, Moses is barely mentioned in this chapter. In this respect, we may even say that Krochmal's account of early Israelite history is more "critical" than Kaufmann's, which following the biblical account accords a central role to Moses in the founding of the Israelite religion.[13] Still, of all of Kaufmann's criticisms of Krochmal in this footnote, this is the best grounded.

Let us proceed to the second difference. Kaufmann continues:

> Aside from this, his midrash contains the same amalgam of historical scholarship and metaphysical dogmatics that typifies the Hegelian school. According to Krochmal, the Hegelian idea of the "absolute spirit" appeared to Israel in its early history in all its conceptual-philosophical abstraction. The various corporeal symbols found in the Bible all refer to this ideal; they serve as a "sign" (*ot*) for this spirit. There was never any development with regard to how this spirit was understood. One can speak of development only with regard to its political social activity. In truth, as we will see later on, the fundamental idea arose in Israel not as an abstract concept, in its full philosophical perfection, but as an intuitive vision, the same way as the beginnings of any original culture arise. In any event, there is no expression in this fundamental Israelite idea of any notion of "absolute spirit."

Kaufmann makes the same point in "Le-Birur torato shel R. Nachman Krochmal." He writes there of "the crystallization [according to Krochmal] within the monotheistic faith of the recognition of the spirit in its universal essence and as abstracted from anything corporeal," as contrasted with "the pagan peoples [who] did not grasp the divine spirit in its true abstract and universal essence."[14]

This criticism, in my view, misses the mark. Contrary to Kaufmann's assertion in his note that "[a]ccording to Krochmal, the Hegelian idea of the

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[12] It should be noted, however, that at the beginning of chapter 13 Krochmal presents a much more traditional picture.

[13] Of course, in his assertion that biblical monotheism began with Moses, Kaufmann takes a more critical position than does Krochmal who traces it back to the Patriarchs.

[14] "Le-birur torato shel R. Nachman Krochmal," 18. A bit later on (18–19) Kaufmann, apparently referring the end of Chapter 7 of *MNZ*, more carefully states that for Krochmal the "Jewish people attained to the cognition of the spirit in its true being, the cognition of the 'absolute spirit,' the God of the world, the source of all spiritual existence, the infinite spirit which cannot be apprehended by imagination or sense and cannot be corporeally represented by any image or form." Of course, this is true, but Kaufmann leaves out the critical element that this cognition on the part of the Jewish people, to begin with, took the form of an imaginative intuitive vision.

'absolute spirit' appeared to Israel in its early history in all its conceptual-philosophical abstraction," and to his similar assertion in "Le-Birur torato shel R. Nachman Krochmal" that for Krochmal the monotheistic faith of the Bible recognized "the spirit in its universal essence and as abstracted from anything corporeal," Krochmal consistently emphasizes that the Torah conceives of the *ruḥani ha-muḥlat*, absolute spirit, in terms of *tziyyurei teḥilat ha-maḥshavah,* representations of incipient thought (a term borrowed from that great classic of medieval Jewish rationalist philosophy Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*[15]), or as *Vorstellung*, representations, as opposed to *maḥshevot ha-sekhel*, intellectual conceptual categories or *Begriffe* (the German terms are Krochmal's).[16] Or, again, he contrasts *emunah ha-toriyyit*, Torahitic faith, with *ḥokhmat ha-emunah*, the wisdom of faith.[17] As Yehoyada Amir emphasizes, one must distinguish between the "absolute spirit," in itself, in its unchanging "true abstract and universal essence," and the Jewish people's understanding of "absolute spirit," which is progressive, and which, to begin with, takes the form of imaginative representation.[18]

Kaufmann's criticism here would seem to be much more appropriately directed against Maimonides, as opposed to Krochmal. For Maimonides, the Torah's intellectual level constitutes its inner meaning, and the prophets were, indeed, philosophers who conceived of God in abstract philosophical terms, but who, in their prophetic visions as recorded in Scripture, translated their intellectual understanding into popular imaginative categories in an attempt to make that abstract understanding accessible to the entire people. For Maimonides, this is the import of the rabbinic statement, "The Torah speaks in the language of the sons of man," "the language of the sons of man," meaning, for Maimonides "in accordance with the imagination of the multitude."[19] In this respect, the highest truth, in Maimonides' view, was

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15 *Guide* 1:26 and 46.

16 See *MNZ*, chap. 2, 12; chap. 6, 30–32.

17 See *MNZ*, chap. 16, 272–74.

18 Amir, "She'arim le-emunah tzerufah," *MNZ*, 37–38 (of his Introduction) Similarly, Julius Guttmann, *Philosophies of Judaism: The History of Jewish Philosophy from Biblical Times to Franz Rosenzweig* (trans. David Silverman; New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), 322, emphasizes that for Krochmal "the truth, present in Judaism from its inception, develops to ever greater levels of clarity and higher forms of conceptual thought."

19 *Guide* 1:26, cf. 1:33, 46. Strikingly, Kaufmann in "Le-birur torato shel R. Nachman Krochmal," 7, states that for Krochmal the reason "the *emunah ha-toriyyit*, the Torahitic faith (the religion that was given through prophetic revelation) expressed its truths not in abstract concepts but in concrete poetic images" was because "it was intended for the entire people." Kaufmann appears to be suggesting that, according to Krochmal, the prophets themselves grasped the truth in form of abstract concepts, but they translated these "abstract concepts" into "concrete poetic images" in an attempt to present them to "the entire people." This is a very fine formulation of Maimonides' view—but not of Krochmal's! Thus Guttmann, *Philosophies of Judaism*, 327, as if he had Kaufmann's

always known, and history plays a role only in its dissemination. Moreover, Maimonides states in the *Mishneh Torah* that the Torah explicitly ("meforash") teaches the doctrine of God's incorporeality.[20] For Maimonides, then, to translate the contents of the Torah from the level of imagination to that of intellect is to *recover* the *original* hidden form of the Torah's truth, the truth, we may say, as it existed in the mind of the prophets.

For Krochmal, however—and here his view of the relationship between religion and philosophy does indeed resemble Hegel's—religion and philosophy may have the same truth for their content, but religion, in Krochmal's case specifically the Torah, conceives of that content, as stated above, in imaginative, representational categories, while philosophy translates that content into rational, conceptual categories. The prophets, for Krochmal, then, were *not* philosophers, but attained knowledge of the truth in an intuitive, immediate fashion that might be properly termed revelation, and the translation of Scripture into philosophical terms is not, contra Maimonides, a recovery of the *original* hidden form of the Torah's truth, but rather a genuine translation of the Torah's content from its *original* imaginative form into a *new* form that takes place over the course of history The emergence of the Jewish faith in all its conceptual purity and richness is then a historical process, one that, for Krochmal, has still not been completed.[21] To be sure, Krochmal in the historical chapters of *MNZ* often subtly weaves biblical phrases into his account and then proceeds to restate that representational biblical language in "pure" conceptual terms. But this is *his* own translation; he never claimed nor believed that the prophets themselves attained this level of conceptual thought.[22]

Allow me here a point of personal privilege. A number of years ago, I wrote an article on *MNZ* for the *Enzyklopädie jüdischer Geschichte und Kultur*.[23] At the time I wrote it, Kaufmann was the furthest thing from my mind, and I hadn't looked at *Toledot* in years. I wrote there what I just wrote in the immediately above paragraph, namely that "the prophets, for Krochmal, were not philosophers, but attained knowledge of the truth in an

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formulation in mind, correctly warns that Krochmal's "statement…that Scripture contains all the insights of philosophy means only that they are there potentially—if we cleanse scriptural doctrines of their dross of representation and change them into their pure conceptual form, and if deduce from them all the conclusions that thought can derive." Exactly!

20 *Laws of the Foundations of the Torah* 1:8.

21 See Amir, "She'arim le-emunah tzerufah," *MNZ*, 37–39 (of his introduction).

22 For a particularly incisive analysis of the fundamental differences between Maimonides and Krochmal regarding the relationship between the teachings of the prophets and the truths of philosophy, see Eliezer Schweid, *A History of Jewish Thought in Modern Times* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Keter, 1977), 196–98.

23 Lawrence Kaplan, "More Nevukhe ha-Zeman," *Enzyklopädie jüdischer Geschichte und Kultur* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler), Vol. 4, 231–35.

intuitive, immediate fashion that might be properly termed revelation."[24] It was only when I began my research for this paper, and once again returned to Kaufmann, that I was struck by the verbal similarity between what I wrote about Krochmal in my encyclopedia article and Kaufmann's description of the primal idea of the Bible as an "intuitive vision." Of course, I must add that Kaufmann, insofar as he remains strictly on an empirical level, is properly agnostic as to whether we can view this "intuitive vision," as deriving from a transcendent source.[25]

We continue with the third and last difference:

> Aside from this, Krochmal seeks to derive from this idea the entire history of Israel, basing himself on the Hegelian assumption that both the natural

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[24] Kaplan, "More Nevukhe ha-Zeman," 233. I am citing from the original English version of the essay, which was translated into German.

[25] Kaufmann touches upon the issue as to whether one may view this "intuitive vision," as deriving from a transcendent source in his responses to criticisms of the first volume of *Toledot* upon its appearance in 1937. In his essay "Be-kivshonah shel ha-yetzirah ha-le'umit" ("The Secret of National Creativity") (originally published in *Moznaim* 13 [1941]: 237–51, and republished as the Introduction to the 1967 edition of *Toledot* [see above, n. 3], 21–44 [Hebrew pagination]; and in his posthumously edited collection of essays, *Mi-kivshonah shel ha-yetzirah ha-mikrait* [On the Secret of Biblical Creativity; Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1966], 11–33), Kaufmann insists that the concepts he utilized in the first volume of *Toledot* to explain the origins of Israelite monotheism, namely, "the creative human spirit, the power of creation of an ethnic group or the creative spirit of a nation, the power of the objective spirit to create a stylistic imprint, the power of the idea in the sphere of the objective spirit to shape the image of cultural values and to fashion its symbols—all [these concepts] are definitely historical-empirical matters" (21: page references are to *Mi-kivshonah shel ha-yetzirah ha-mikrait*). In response to criticisms leveled against him by S. D. Goitein and E. E. Urbach that his claim that the biblical monotheistic faith was "the product of the creative spirit of the people of Israel" is, in truth, a crypto-appeal to the miraculous or to revelation (26), Kaufmann reiterates his claim that the idea of a people's creative spirit is strictly historical-empirical, and further notes that "everything that I have said concerning the creative spirit of the people of the Israelite nation is set within this general theory concerning the creative spirit of all human beings and all nations on earth" (27). He does, however, admit that this particular result of the creative spirit of the people of Israel, namely, biblical monotheism, was, in terms of its content, unique, and differed radically from all the multifarious forms of pagan creativity. He, therefore, concludes: "With regard to the form, one can say that in the last analysis this creation [biblical monotheism] as well is nothing more than a new unique creation of the human spirit. But with respect to content, this is not so. We may therefore assume here a unique act of providence. But with this we have already left the realm of empirical history and entered the realm of faith" (28). In his essay, "Bikkoret le-bikkoret" ("A Critique of a Critique") (originally published as "'Inyenei mikra" [Biblical Issues] in *Moznaim* 15 [1943]: 32–37; and republished in *Mi-kivshonah shel ha-yetzirah ha-mikrait*, 281–90), in response to the claim of Aharon Kaminka that "the biblical faith was born from intellectual inquiry into the nature of things and from historical experience" (288), Kaufmann defends and reiterates his view that biblical faith "was not a form of intellectual-conceptual knowledge, but rather was visionary and intuitive" (290). This leads directly to the essay's striking conclusion. "However this intuitive perception is in no way inferior to intellectual understanding. And perhaps it transcends it?"

> and historical world is only an embodiment of the Idea. A metaphysical entity here inserts itself into history. The law of the embodiment of the Idea attains the status of a law that by itself serves to lay out the path to history. And, side by side with this law, "divine governance" is also active in combining these events together into an intellectual plan. And all this activity forms a closed system within the framework of the three-fold development of the organism in its three eras—growth, maturity, and decline. There is no place for any of these concepts in the viewpoint expressed [in our text]. The activity of the fundamental Israelite idea did not serve as a metaphysical source of Israelite history nor did its embodiment serve as a law of that history. The idea was only one causal factor, to be sure a fundamental and primal causal factor, in Israelite history, whose course was also determined by a number of other causal factors…. Certainly the history of the people and the history of the religion of Israel were not subject to some threefold schema. The development of the idea was "organic" only in the sense that its manifestations were all bound up with a single primal root, that they all, as it were, grew out of single primal intuition.

This criticism, unlike the previous one, is not without merit. Certainly, Krochmal's artificial three-fold historical scheme of organic growth, maturity, and decline—in the case of the Jewish people thrice repeated!—forces his account of Jewish history into a Procrustean bed.[26] Here Kaufmann's criticisms of "Krochmal's artificial three-fold historical scheme of organic growth, maturity, and decline" reminds one of his justified criticisms of the various artificial schemes of cultural and spiritual development proffered by Montesquieu, Hegel, and others.

Nevertheless, Kaufmann's overall understanding of Krochmal here is reductive. Kaufmann sees Krochmal as just being a speculative metaphysician and philosopher of history, in whose view *ha-ruḥani ha-muḥlat* is some metaphysical entity that just inserted itself into the history of the Jewish people and determined all its subsequent history. Kaufmann misses the fact that Krochmal is operating on two levels. He is not just a speculative metaphysician and philosopher of history, but also or rather *first* a cultural historian, for whom, like Kaufmann, ideas play a key role in a people's history, not in some transcendent metaphysical sense, but because they are believed in by that people, and are embedded and embodied in that people's institutions, symbols, and the like, that is, in its culture.

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[26] It should be noted that this three-fold scheme of organic growth, maturity, and decline was, as Harris notes, "very much a commonplace in modern historical thought." See Harris, *Nachman Krochmal*, 125. In addition to Krochmal's finding support for this threefold scheme in the writings of Vico, Herder and Hegel (above, n. 9), he may have been influenced as well by Mendelssohn's very elaborate presentation of this scheme in the *Bi'ur*, at the very end of his commentary on Exodus. A careful comparison of Mendelssohn's presentation there and Krochmal's presentation in chapter 7 of *MNZ* remains a scholarly desideratum.

Let us look at chapter 6 of *MNZ*, "Ha-siman ha-ruḥani ve-ha-ot (The Spiritual Symbol and the Sign)," where Krochmal refers to speech (30–31). We can view speech, Krochmal says, as operating on four levels. First, speech is just comprised of sound waves, a purely mechanical process. Second, it is perceived both by men and animals as sound, *kol*, a type of sensation. Third, in the human sphere it becomes speech in the strict sense, serving human beings as a meaningful form of expression and communication, a means of expression and communication that can take place not just by speaking, but by writing, sign language, musical and visual communication, and the like. Here we have culture as a product of the human spirit. At this point, however, the question arises: Whence derives this culture-making activity of the human spirit? Here Krochmal, following Hegel, spirals to the fourth level of speech and answers that from a higher speculative standpoint the human spirit's ability to create culture should be inverted and seen as spirit's expressing itself through human creativity.

We see the same progression at work in chapter 7, "Goyyim ve-elohav" (The Nations and their Gods), where we can almost say that Krochmal in the chapter's beginning functions as a cultural anthropologist (34–35). Societies, Krochmal states, develop from primitive beginnings and gradually reach, by means of division of labor, a level of material wealth and sufficiency. They then develop social and legal institutions, as well as ideas of justice, beauty, ethics honor, and love. There follows literature, art, music, and, finally, religious beliefs. Note that nothing is said about the truth of these beliefs, of the reality of the god or gods believed in by a particular people. All this is the product of the people's creative spirit. The sum total of the cultural products of the people's creativity, of their spiritual treasure, Krochmal goes on to state, is called by contemporary scholars *ruaḥ ha-umah*, "the spirit of the people."

However, Krochmal goes on to say (35–36), the same social and cultural processes responsible for a society's growth and its flourishing contain within themselves the seed of decline. Luxury leads to decadence, the accumulation of wealth leads to class divisions, to the oppression of the poor by the rich, and the like. There thus emerge four destructive forces which lead to the decline and disintegration of society: pleasure, pride, power, and superstition. Here we have, expressed in cultural and sociological terms, the origins of the biological-organic, three-fold scheme of historical development.[27] The point is not whether we agree with Krochmal's analysis, but that for him this is an immanent historical development.

Krochmal then observes that Scripture in its representational fashion refers to the spirit of the people as the god of the people or its guardian angel

[27] I understand this triadic developmental scheme as being, at one and the same time, both biological-organic and social-cultural. Note that in chapter 7 of *MNZ,* 35–36, Krochmal emphasizes the social-cultural aspect, while at the beginning of chapter 8, 40–42, he emphasizes the biological-organic aspect.

(37). But it is clear that what we have here is a personification and projection of a human social and cultural phenomenon. Only at this point does Krochmal make his speculative turn and state that from a speculative viewpoint we should view the sum total of the cultural creativity of a particular people, in all its unique and special character, as partial spirit that achieves self-expression through them. But this speculative assertion is made only *after* Krochmal has done his cultural work.

There is no contradiction, then, between, Krochmal, on the one hand, arguing that we should treat the historical realm as independent and autonomous, developing in accordance with its own immanent processes, while on the other hand, maintaining that we should see the multiple forms of cultural creativity arising in the course of the history of the nations as manifestations of supernal metaphysical spiritual principles. Any apparent contradiction arises from a failure to take into account the two different levels on which Krochmal is conducting his discussion and their dialectical relationship to one another. That is, Krochmal, qua cultural historian, contends, that, *to begin with*, we should treat the historical realm as independent and autonomous, developing in accordance with own immanent processes. Only afterward does he, *qua* speculative philosopher, maintain that we should rise to a higher level and see the multiple forms of cultural creativity arising in the course of the history of the nations, those forms of cultural creativity which *directly and immanently give rise to developments in the historical realm,* as manifestations of supernal, metaphysical spiritual principles. [28]

If we, then, focus on Krochmal the cultural historian, is his view so different from Kaufmann's? Job Jindo in his important essay, "Recontextualizing Kaufmann: His Empirical Concept of the Bible and its Significance in Jewish Intellectual History," describes Kaufmann's view of *ruaḥ* thus:

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[28] I am offering here a way understanding the relationship between Krochmal's appeal to metaphysical principles found primarily in chapter 6 of *MNZ* and his immanent cultural-historical analyses found in chapters 7–10. Some scholars, for example, Natan Rotenstreich, argue that Krochmal's appeal to metaphysical principles does not sit well with his use of immanent cultural-historical analyses, resulting in a dualism in his historical account that he never seeks to resolve. See N. Rotenstreich, *Jewish Thought in Modern Times* (in Hebrew; 2 vols.; Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1956), 1:55–56. On the other hand, Guttmann, *Philosophies of Judaism*, 447, n. 68, rejects the presence of any such dualism, arguing that we should not, as does Rotenstreich, identify the spirits of the nations of the world and the spirit of the Jewish people with specific metaphysical principles and absolute spirit, respectively, but rather view them as their manifestations. Whether this entirely resolves this dualism may be doubted, as Guttmann himself seems to be aware. For further discussion, see Moshe Schwarcz, "The Status of the Problem of Jewish Historiosophy in the Teachings of N. Krochmal and F. Rosenzweig," in *Language, Myth, Art* (in Hebrew; Tel Aviv: Schocken, 1967), 204–7. My claim is that this problem has arisen only because scholars neglected to take into account the two different levels on which Krochmal was conducting his discussion and their dialectical relationship to one another.

> Kaufmann developed an abiding interest in the riddle of Jewish survival, which, for his entire life, he sought to investigate according to the general principles of empirical analysis. For that reason, while Kaufmann espoused the notion of the Bible as a product of the *ruaḥ le'umi* of ancient Israel, he insisted on using the term *ruaḥ* (spirit or mind; cf. *Geist* in German) only in the empirical sense and not in a speculative Hegelian or romanticist sense (cf. *Volksgeist*), which was how the term was usually used among Jewish thinkers of this period.[29]

Jindo explains:

> Kaufmann is an "empiricist," but, at the same time, not an empirical "materialist." In other words, he thinks that we cannot explain cultural creativity by material conditions alone and that we must take into account a category of *ruaḥ*, which, for him, is a primal and fundamental factor in cultural creativity, a factor equally as important as any other moment or element, be that material or social. According to Kaufmann, the efficacy and function of *ruaḥ* involve many qualities: "imagination, ingenious intuition, inventive capacity, ability to perceive and observe, capacity for abstraction and apprehension of the essence and relationship among concepts and ideas, meditation, ethical assessment in and of itself, capacity for articulation and symbolization, and the ability to influence others." And to give an empirical grounding to this category, Kaufmann introduces a cultural phenomenon that he calls an "infinite variety of cultural creative forms."
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> When we look at the history of human culture, Kaufmann argues, we observe an infinite variety of creative forms, in practically all spheres of human life, such as in the arts, language, law, or religion—be they on the individual or collective level or in an everyday setting or otherwise—and this phenomenon, as well as its origin, cannot be explained by material or social conditions alone. To account for this phenomenon, Kaufmann insists that we must assume the creative efficacy of *ruaḥ* as an empirical category of historical experience.[30]

Jindo argues at length that Kaufmann's views are similar to those of Wilhelm Dilthey,[31] but, in light of my discussion above, I believe it is fair to

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[29] Jindo, "Recontextualizing Kaufmann: His Empirical Concept of the Bible and its Significance in Jewish Intellectual History," *JJTP* 19.2 (2011): 104.

[30] Jindo, "Recontextualizing Kaufmann," 112–13.

[31] Jindo, "Recontextualizing Kaufmann," 106–13. Jindo concedes that "Kaufmann was an independent thinker who voraciously read and studied history, philosophy, and sociology, and it does little justice to him if we attribute the foundations of his theoretical framework to any one scholar, even to Dilthey. Peculiarly, furthermore, Kaufmann *nowhere makes mention of Dilthey in his work*" (109; italics added). "Nonetheless," he immediately maintains, "*Dilthey's influence on Kaufmann's work is apparent*, and Dilthey's project of cultural studies indeed enables us to better understand Kaufmann's conception of the Bible" (109; italics added).

conclude that they are strikingly close to that of Krochmal, the cultural historian, as well.

Perhaps one might wish to defend Kaufmann's critique of Krochmal by arguing that the mode of procedure I have ascribed to Krochmal, moving from cultural history to speculative metaphysics, holds true only for the history and destiny of the nations of the world; however, the history of Israel, for Krochmal, is an exception to that rule, and there indeed Krochmal maintains, as Kaufmann claims, that the *ruḥani ha-muḥlat* just inserted itself at some point into Jewish history, determining all the people's subsequent destiny. I think this is to misunderstand Krochmal, although we perhaps ought to forgive Kaufmann for this misunderstanding, since Krochmal here, perhaps deliberately, left himself open to it.

Thus, as I noted, Krochmal in chapter 7 of *MNZ*, "Goyyim ve-elohav (The Nations and their Gods)," in describing the patterns of cultural development and the processes of growth, maturity, and decline of the nations of the world *first* functions as a cultural historian, maintaining that Scripture's description of the spirit of a people as the god of the people or its guardian angel is just a personification and projection of a human social and cultural phenomenon. Only *afterwards* does he make his speculative turn and state that from a speculative viewpoint we should view the sum total of the cultural creativity of a particular people, in all its unique and special character, as partial spirit achieving self-expression through them. Yet, when he turns in the chapter from the "gods" or "guardian angels" to the God of Israel, he *begins* with the dramatic speculative assertion that its God, to whom it owes unique destiny, is the Creator of all, God as absolute spirit:

> The prophet has proclaimed: "Not like these [the 'gods' or 'guardian angels' of the nations of the world] is the portion of Jacob; for He is the Creator of all and Israel is the tribe of His inheritance, the Lord of Hosts is His name" (Jer. 10:16), that is to say that He is the Absolute Spirit, and there is none other beside Him [Who is] the source of all spiritual entities and encompassing them all (*MNZ*, 37-38).

I believe, however, that a close examination of the continuation of Krochmal's discussion in that chapter will indicate that though Krochmal's beginning his discussion of Israel's unique destiny with this dramatic assertion is certainly rhetorically stirring, in truth, the claim that the Jewish people is the allotted portion of the Absolute Spirit refers (to begin with) not to a metaphysical claim, but to the people's empirically verifiable, special religious awareness of the one true God, as that awareness empirically manifested itself throughout its history.

Thus we should note that though Krochmal asserts that Jacob's portion is " the Creator of all … the Lord of Hosts is His name,' that is to say that He is the Absolute Spirit, and there is none other beside Him [Who is] the source of all spiritual entities and encompassing them all," he does not as-

sert anywhere in the chapter, *contra* Kaufmann, that "a metaphysical entity here inserts itself into history." True, Krochmal writes of the "divine governance" that "planned…to choose the source whence we were hewn, namely, the holy patriarchs" (38). Note though that at the chapter's start Krochmal begins his description of the patterns of cultural development and the processes of growth, maturity, and decline of the nations of the world by similarly writing about the "plan of the divine governance not to scatter the human species as completely separated individuals… but to combine it into small and large groups" (34). It should be clear that the "plan of the divine governance" referred to at the chapter's beginning operates through purely naturalistic social and anthropological processes. Why should we assume that the divine governance that chose "the source whence we were hewn" operated in different fashion?[32] Finally, Krochmal in writing of the "divine wisdom that guided and perfected the affairs" of the Jewish people in order to ensure that it become "a kingdom of priests, that is, the teacher of the absolute Torahitic faith to the entire human species" describes that perfection as consisting in the people's awareness that with "every action of our people and with every exalted and beneficent spirit that is made manifest and comes to light in our midst we should know in our hearts and acknowledge with our mouths that the living God is in our midst and all this derives from His hand, that is, that they are all rooted in Him and emanate from His spirit that encompasses all spiritual manifestations" (38). Krochmal goes on to write "And this is the secret or, in our terms, this is the rational conception of the phrases 'and I will dwell in their midst' (Exod. 25:8), 'For I am with you' (Jer. 42:11), 'And My spirit abides in your midst' (Hag. 2:5). And this is the secret of the term '*Shekhinah*' and of the phrase 'the *Shekhinah* (divine Presence) rests on Israel'" (38).

A number of observations should be made regarding this last extended quote. First, note how the Jewish people's task as "a kingdom of priests" is to teach "the entire human species" the "absolute Torahitic faith," that is, religious truths in their imaginative representational form, not "the wisdom of faith," that is, religious truths in their rational, conceptual form. Second, note how the people's perfection consists in their own religious awareness of their relationship with God. Note, as well, how that religious awareness

[32] Kaufmann in *Golah*, 1:167, n. 2, in one of his few extended comments about Krochmal in the book, argues that Krochmal's appeal in *MNZ*, chapter 7, to a "natural order" governing the affairs of Jewish history "does not diminish from the image of divine providence" guiding the people's history in teleological fashion. It should be noted, however, that Krochmal refers here to divine governance (*hanhagah*), and not divine providence (*hashgaḥah*). Governance has a more impersonal and naturalistic ring than providence. Moreover, this same divine governance that guides the affairs of Jewish history also operates in an impersonal, naturalistic fashion to ensure the emergence and development of all human societies. Kaufmann, here, like elsewhere, as I have sought to show, fails to distinguish between the two levels of Krochmal's analysis.

itself is expressed first in imaginative representational form, "that the living God is in our midst and all this derives from His hand," and then in rational, conceptual form, "that they [spiritual qualities] are all rooted in Him and emanate from His spirit that encompasses all spiritual manifestations." Most important, it is this religious awareness, whether expressed in imaginative representational form or in rational, conceptual form, which is the rational meaning of the biblical and rabbinic claim that the *Shekhinah*, the divine Presence, dwells within the midst of the Jewish people.

Thus, the presence of God as absolute spirit among the Jewish people refers, to begin with, to the people's monotheistic belief, to their belief in one God, Creator and Ruler of the heaven and earth, though, as stated earlier, they conceived of that God in representational, non-abstract, non-conceptual terms, and to their further belief, and this is critical, that all their actions and spiritual goods and attainments derived from His presence among them. That is the starting point: the belief of the people, as an empirical phenomenon, deriving from the people's spirit. Only then does Krochmal make his speculative turn and state that from a speculative viewpoint we should view these very beliefs as Absolute Spirit's attaining self-expression and self-knowledge through the Jewish people. The parallels between his procedure here and his procedure with respect to the history of nations of the world are evident. The bottom line, then, is that with regard to the history of Israel Krochmal makes the same move from cultural history to speculative metaphysics as he does with regard to the history of nations of the world.

As for Kaufmann's extreme claim that, for Krochmal, not only did the *ruḥani ha-muḥlat* as a "metaphysical entity … insert … itself into history," but it determined the Jewish people's entire subsequent history, while this essay is not the place to undertake an examination of Krochmal's detailed account of the first two cycles of Jewish history in *MNZ*, chapters 8–10, I believe that such an examination will easily suffice to show the claim's falsity.[33] Indeed, its falsity is so evident that I assume that Kaufmann did not mean that for Krochmal the *ruḥani ha-muḥlat*'s presence among the Jewish people literally determined all its subsequent history in all its details, but rather that it was responsible for its being an *am 'olam*, an eternal people. That is, for Krochmal, while the nations of the world, went through periods of growth, maturity and flourishing, and decline, never to rise again, the Jewish people also went through this same cycle of growth, maturity and flourishing, and decline, but then, unlike the nations of the world,

[33] Note, for example, the great weight that Krochmal ascribes in chapter 8, 47, to contingent social and political factors (the jealousy of the tribes, the continued existence of the high places, etc.) in accounting for the decline of the Jewish people after the death of Solomon, whose reign constituted the high point of the people's development during the first cycle of its existence.

thanks to the presence of absolute spirit among them, they did not disappear from the stage of history, but began the cycle again. Surely here, so I believe Kaufmann thought, Krochmal must have discerned a transcendent element inserting itself into the Jewish people's history and guaranteeing their eternity.

That this indeed is Kaufmann's view emerges from his discussion in "Le-Birur Torato shel R. Nachman Krochmal." There he modifies the claim made in his note, and argues that while Krochmal explains the course of events *within* each individual cycle of Jewish history in terms of immanent processes, whether historical-cultural or biological-organic, with regard to the *transition* from cycle to cycle, to the rise after the fall, there, by contrast, Krochmal appeals in speculative fashion to the operations of the presence of the absolute spirit among them and not to inner immanent causation.[34]

But even this modified claim must be rejected.

True, from a speculative standpoint, the eternity of the Jews is seen as resulting from absolute spirit's need to attain complete self-expression, but from an historical vantage point—and in chapters 8–10 Krochmal is first and foremost an historian—the process of the constant renewal of the Jewish people is explained by Krochmal in immanent terms, whereby it was the Jews' ardent monotheistic faith (not a "metaphysical entity [that] insert[ed] itself into history") that endowed them with the strength to persevere under the most arduous circumstances.[35] Indeed, Krochmal seeks to

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[34] "Le-Birur Torato shel R. Nachman Krochmal," 19. "And this was the secret of the Jewish people's fate. It was saved from the laws of extinction [to which all other nations are subject] on account of the infinite 'absolute spirit' that was embodied in it. It is as eternal as the eternal spirit that manifested itself in its life. To the extent that the nation was an organic 'body,' it was subject to the law of organic development. In its midst, as well, the destructive forces that wreak destruction on a people were engendered, and, therefore, it as well was not spared destruction. But its destruction was just earthly-political, 'bodily'; however, its spiritual force continued to endure in its midst." A similar approach is espoused by Rotenstreich, "Gilgulehah shel maḥzoriyyut" ("Cyclical Transformations"), *Sefer Dov Sadan* (eds. S. Werses, N. Rotenstreich, and H. Shmeruk; Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, 1977), 307–8.

[35] Thus Harris, *Nachman Krochmal*, 75–76, affirms that for Krochmal, "the knowledge of God as absolute spirit…was a center piece of Jewish self-awareness through the ages …Jews have carried with them a unique conception of God; …this unique conception of God is a product of a particular national consciousness; …this particular national consciousness has crucial historical implications." Later on in his book (127), Harris spells out what these crucial historical implications are and how they flow from the Jewish people's "particular national consciousness." He writes, "While Israel [for Krochmal] is subject to the ineluctable decay that completes the cycle [of growth, maturity, and decline], it is not subject to the demise that ensues because of its consciousness of God's absolute being…Israel, then, will not disappear, but begin the process anew. It is important to point out that in this picture the absolute being is not described as the active force ensuring Israel's survival; rather the people, having been brought to the awareness of the unity of all existence in God, are capable of weathering circumstances, such as ex-

show that the seeds of renewal of a new cycle were *already* to be found in the period of decline of the previous one.[36] There can be no greater proof that for Krochmal the transition from cycle to cycle, the rise after the fall, can and should be explained in terms of immanent historical processes, first and foremost in terms of the people's indomitable monotheistic faith as embodied in their cultural national life.[37]

To return to Kaufmann: Kaufmann began his great socio-historical work, *Golah ve-nekhar* (Exile and Alienation, 1929–1930) with the question of why the historical destiny of the Jewish people differed from that of all the other ancient peoples of the world,[38] or, to translate this question into Krochmalian terms, how was it that the Jewish people, alone among all the other ancient peoples of the world, was an *ʿAm ʿOlam*. The answer Kaufmann gave there, with great learning and insight, an answer that he already gave in his first major article, published in 1914 at the age of twenty-four,

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ile, that other cultures, due to their incomplete spirituality, are not." Similarly, Amir, "Sheʿarim le-emunah tzerufah," *MNZ*, 35–36 (of his Introduction), emphasizes that, for Krochmal, the factors that enabled the Jewish people to weather the destruction of the first Temple and the subsequent exile and renew their existence were their monotheistic belief, "the quality and intensity of their faith," and "the activity of their poets and prophets," with their words of consolation and, even more important, hope. Again, it is almost as if Harris and Amir are directing their remarks against Kaufmann.

36 I hope to show this in a future article.

37 If I might elaborate upon this point in somewhat technical philosophical language: From an historical vantage point, that of *verstand*, the (partial) spirit manifested in the history of one of the nations of the world refers to the sum total of its cultural creativity—a creativity usually expressed most strongly in one area: beauty, law, and the like—while the connection between the Jewish people and absolute spirit refers to their monotheistic faith. From a speculative standpoint, however, that of *vernunft*, the matter is reversed, and a particular nation's cultural creativity and the Jewish people's monotheistic faith should be viewed as the means whereby spirit, whether partial or absolute, attains self-expression and self-awareness. However the matter be viewed, the attachment of the nations of the world to partial spirits connected to matter results in their being subjected to the organismic-biological "laws" of history, whereby each nation undergoes a cycle of growth, maturity, and decline and annihilation, though the products of its cultural creativity, on account of their spiritual nature, are never lost, but incorporated into mankind's general spiritual patrimony. On the other hand, the attachment of the Jewish people to absolute spirit guarantees that, although it too is subject to the historical "law" of growth, maturity, and decline, after the completion of its initial cycle, rather than disappearing, it will renew itself, to begin yet another cycle. In this respect, the Jewish people, though not exempt from history, are an *ʿam olam*, an eternal people. Again, from an immanent historical-cultural viewpoint, the people's "eternity," their ability to renew themselves after each period of decline, derives from the Jews' ardent monotheistic faith that endowed them with the strength to persevere under the most arduous circumstances—indeed, as I have noted, the seeds of renewal of a new cycle are already to be found in the period of decline of the previous one—while from a speculative standpoint, the eternity of the Jews is seen as resulting from absolute spirit's need to attain complete self-expression.

38 *Golah*, "Preface," 1:5.

"The Judaism of Aḥad Ha-ʿAm,"[39] was that it was neither some presumed will to live, nor was it material factors, nor was it anti-Semitism, that preserved the Jewish people as a distinct minority among the nations of the world in exile; it was their monotheistic faith. If we focus on Krochmal, the cultural historian, and not on Krochmal, the speculative metaphysician, one must ask: is this so different from Kaufmann's view?

In sum: Kaufmann, in the footnote I have examined, in order to differentiate himself from Krochmal points to the latter's un-critical historical views regarding biblical history, to his supposed assertion that the Bible conceives of God in abstract philosophical terms, and to what Kaufmann conceives as his speculative Hegelian view that history is determined by a metaphysical idea. With respect to Kaufmann's first criticism, as I have indicated, it has a good deal of merit, though I have also argued that Krochmal was not as uncritical as Kaufmann would have it. With respect to Kaufmann's second criticism, it is, I have argued, simply wrong. With regard to his third and perhaps major criticism, I have argued that Kaufmann could level it only by focusing on Krochmal the speculative metaphysician, and ignoring Krochmal the cultural historian. Indeed, I find it hard to understand how Kaufmann, who was such a perceptive observer, could have gone so wrong on this point.

Perhaps precisely because he was so close to Krochmal, he was afraid of being tainted by association with the latter's speculative Hegelian flights, and almost felt compelled to minimize any possible influence Krochmal may have had on his thought. In the period when Kaufmann wrote there could be no greater "sin" for a historian or sociologist than being branded a Hegelian. Perhaps, as well, Kaufmann's strategy in this note is a variant of an unfortunate general polemical tendency in his writings, often remarked upon. As David Berger observes, "The argument in virtually all his works is structured dialectically and builds through a critique of earlier views. In this context, references to thinkers and scholars who anticipated important points in Kaufmann's position are structurally inconvenient, and he succumbed to the temptation to leave them out."[40] Krochmal's views were

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[39] "The Judaism of Aḥad Ha-ʿAm" (in Hebrew), *Ha-Shiloaḥ* 30 (1914): 249–71. For a thorough analysis of Kaufmann's critique of Aḥad Ha-ʿAm, as expressed in that essay and in in many of Kaufmann's subsequent articles and books, see Avinoam Barshai, "Kaufmann Against Aḥad Ha-ʿAm" (in Hebrew), *Yehezkel Kaufmann: Mivḥar Ketavim Le'umiyyim* (edited with an introduction by Avinoam Barshai; Jerusalem: World Zionist Organization, 1995), 60–96. On pp. 140–73 of the volume, Barshai presents selections from two of Kaufmann's works criticizing Aḥad Ha-ʿAm.

[40] David Berger, "Religion, Nationalism, and Historiography: Yehezkel Kaufmann's Account of Jesus and Early Christianity," in *Persecution, Polemic, and Dialogue: Essays in Jewish-Christian Relations* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2010), 309. Other scholars who have leveled a similar criticism against Kaufmann are Stephen Geller, Jon Levenson, and Laurence Silberstein. For references, see Berger, "Religion, Nationalism, and Historiography," 308–9, notes 43–46.

apparently too well known to the readers of *Toledot* for Kaufmann to ignore them entirely. But a few sharp polemical thrusts against Krochmal could suffice (so Kaufmann may have thought to himself) to ensure that readers would not confuse the two's views.

All this is not to deny that there are "fundamental differences" between Kaufmann and Krochmal—though not the ones mentioned in the note! Thus, while for both Kaufmann and Krochmal the biblical monotheistic idea is best understood as a product of a primal intuitive vision, they sharply differ as the contents of this vision. For Kaufmann it is an intuitive non-mythological vision of a God whose will is transcendent and all-supreme, not subject to fate or a meta-divine realm. Flowing from this, for Kaufmann, as is well known, there is an abyss separating biblical religion from paganism. For Krochmal, by contrast, the biblical vision is an intuitive vision of God as the source and sustainer of all existence. It follows from Krochmal's view, as is also well known, that the divide between pagan religions as religions of limited partial spirit and biblical religion as the religion of unlimited, all-encompassing spirit is not a total one. This difference between the two thinkers, in turn, may have influenced their differing views regarding the nature of the internal, organic, evolutionary development of Judaism. For Kaufmann the development primarily consisted in the emergence of new *religious* ideas, while for Krochmal it primarily consisted of, to cite Guttmann, "the truth, present in Judaism from its inception, develop[ing] to ever greater levels of clarity and higher forms of conceptual thought."[41] It appears that, for Kaufmann, the primal biblical intuitive vision of God's *personal* transcendent and all-supreme will does not lend itself—or, at least, does not easily lend itself—to philosophical abstraction.[42] For Krochmal, to the contrary, the intuitive biblical vision of God as the source and sustainer of all existence almost appears to call for philosophic clarification and conceptualization.[43]

Another important difference between Kaufmann and Krochmal, referred to by Kaufmann himself, is the way in which they understand the operation of "the spirit of the people" (*ruaḥ ha-umah*). For Krochmal national or collective spirit expresses itself primarily in the commonality of cultural creative forms, while for Kaufmann it expresses itself primarily in the multiplicity and diversity of those forms.[44] To cite Kaufmann:

> We say that there is a national spirit not because we distinguish a single impress in each national culture, a single unified "essence" embodied in all its values and events in all periods of its history, but because we distinguish in

41 See above, n. 19 for this citation.

42 See Kaufmann's important remarks on the difficulty biblical religion had in absorbing the philosophical idea of an abstract God in "Ha-raʿayon ha-penimi shel ha-aḥdut ha-yisraelit" ("The Inner Idea of Israelite Monotheism"), *Toledot*, 1:252–54.

43 I hope to elaborate on this in a future article.

44 I owe this observation to Job Jindo.

> human culture generally a *variety* of styles against an ethnic background. "National spirit"…has the basic meaning of *national creative power*. If a nation were to create a new cultural style in every generation, this would be even more reason to say it was richly endowed with a national creative spirit.
>
> The doctrine of "national spirit" or "spirit of the people" that was prevalent from Montesquieu through Hegel and his disciples was arrived at from considering the phenomenon of *unity* of cultural style and out of an exaggerated generalization of that unity. In this current of thought, the expression "spirit" has a secondary meaning of common "essence," "idea," internal impress, and uniform direction. Montesquieu showed that there is a "spirit" in the laws of each nation, that is to say, a uniform essential impress that is congruent with the spirit of its form of government. He similarly showed that there is a congruence of "spirit" between a nation's political-legal regime, on the one hand, and its religion, its educational methods, its mores, its economic enterprises, and so forth, on the other. This insight into the unitary character of a national culture and its way of life became a fundamental principle in the method of Hegel and his disciples. This method not only asserts that every sphere in a national culture (religion, law, art, etc.) is informed by the same impress, but it maintains (by extending Montesquieu's basic idea) that all the domains of a national culture are intertwined with each other—to wit: they all embody *a single spiritual essence*. In other words, the unity of a national cultural style exists not only *within* each cultural domain but *across* all domains. This is because each national culture has a single spiritual root—a single "idea," finding symbolic expression in all cultural values…. The harmony between the music of a given nation and its architecture, its laws, its burial customs, and the like are not perceptible to the senses. We can conceive of such a unity only to the extent that we conceive all the values of the culture as symbols of a fundamental idea or notion (as a "sign of the spiritual," in the language of Nachman Krochmal). We can call this approach "symbolic ideationalism."[45]

While Kaufmann mentions Krochmal only in passing at the end this passage, the criticism expressed in it certainly applies to the latter's view "that in each nation one spiritual attribute predominates, while the others are integrated into it and determined by it" (37).

Yet, we should not exaggerate the difference between Kaufmann and Krochmal on this point. Thus Kaufmannn admits that "symbolic ideationalism…is not spun out of thin air" (19). As he explains:

> It is a fact that national cultures possess unity of imprint and style, although it is not comprehensive and absolute. An ethnic culture is not a hodgepodge of evanescent forms, but it tends toward fixity, toward continuity of "tradition." Wherever there is no foreign influence, nations tend to perpetuate a tradition of cultural style for many generations. Also, an ethnic culture tends

[45] "Be-kivshonah shel ha-yetzirah ha-le'umit," 16–17.

> to exhibit unity not only within one domain but also to a certain extent across domains, of the kind that Montesquieu asserts. There is a harmony of spirit in the life and culture of a nation. A despotic government does not go along with liberal education. An ascetic religion is not compatible with gay, sensual art. A military character is not paired well with a commercial spirit. Free social development is not possible in the atmosphere and "spirit" of a caste system such as that of India. One could give other examples. Moreover, certain cultural phenomena are amenable to explanation along the lines of symbolic ideationalism. Not all cultural values are the garb of an "idea," and in any case they are not the garb of a *single* idea. But some cultural values are elucidated on the basis of this secret.[46]

Kaufmann goes on to say that religion is the prime example where cultural values serve as "the garb of a single idea."

> Religion, together with everything that is created under its aegis, is an ideational creation. Legend, ritual, and poetry give it symbolic expression. Since in antiquity almost all elements of culture were grounded in religion, they received its ideational thrust. Religion created its symbols in architecture, sculpture, drawing, dance, and song. Dress, decoration, and social customs have a symbolic element. Law, morality, the state, family, and linguistic expression are all ideational expressions. Not in the sense that in these areas the idea is always the first cause but rather that in these spheres an idea—from whatever source—is apt to serve as a paradigm for shaping an image or formulating a symbol.[47]

If religion in general, for Kaufmann, shapes "almost all elements of culture," how much more so does religion's shaping power, in his view, hold true for the monotheistic faith of Biblical Israel. As we saw earlier, the monotheistic idea, for Kaufmann, shaped all the other aspects of the Jewish people's life and its creativity, and fashioned for itself symbols in legend, law, prophecy, historiography, and ritual.

Is this, then, so different from Krochmal's view of the role of the monotheistic idea in shaping all the other spiritual gifts and attributes possessed by the Jewish people over the course of their history? Thus Krochmal, in a passage part of which I cited before, in writing of the "divine wisdom that guided and perfected the affairs" of the Jewish people in order to ensure that it become "a kingdom of priests, that is the teacher of the absolute Torahitic faith to the entire human species" states that the divine wisdom "worked powerfully with it [the people] until all the spiritual attributes and qualities would become manifest and take shape within it integrated with each other in a balanced fashion, both in manner and form, with all of them [these spiritual attributes] attached to God, may He be blessed, and relying on Him for their truth."

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46 "Be-kivshonah," 20.
47 "Be-kivshonah," 20.

Precisely because Kaufmann realizes that "symbolic ideationalism is not spun out of thin air," and that often a particular society's cultural values are "the garb of a single idea," especially of a religious idea, though symbolic ideationalism overgeneralizes this phenomenon, incorrectly declaring it to be to be a universal law, he emphasizes that his main disagreement with symbolic ideationalism is over how to understand the "unity of formal stamp and ideational content" possessed by national cultures in those cases where it does possess such unity. Symbolic ideationalism, declares Kaufmann, finds the root of this unity "in a common hidden 'essence' embodied in all values and all times" (20). But, Kaufmann objects, "such an assumption has no empirical basis" (20). Rather, Kaufmann maintains:

> On the basis of empirical observation of cultural history, we must say this: the unified character of a culture develops from *the power to exert influence latent in a creation* once it has ventured forth from the sanctum of the creator's spirit and become embodied in *values*, in "objectified spirit." That embodied creation possesses the power to shape images and to chart a path. A society's culture is not a series of evanescent creations of the moment. A group preserves its values and imparts them from generation to generation. It is subject to the power of its values and is attached to them. Every original manifestation of spirit that influences the society and makes an impression on its life is apt to be preserved and transmitted, to influence coming generations, and to shape them in its image and its likeness. Language, religion, art, customs, and laws are a treasury of permanent cultural values, of "objectified spirit" imparted from generation to generation. A society imparts it to individuals, for better or worse. These values establish a model and type. The creative powers in each generation are embodied willy-nilly in the framework of a legacy. It is thus possible to say that a great creation fertilizes the spirit and begets its like. Thus a "style" develops. Furthermore, values influence each other across domains. This influence also comes to fruition in the revealed world of "objective spirit." In a society whose life is absolutely dominated by religion, religion has the power to exercise decisive ideational influence on cultural creation—on art, ethics, the state, and the like. The political regime also has a great power to influence the stamp of the culture. Furthermore, the culture as "objective spirit" combines with those factors that determine the *character* of the nation. Great personalities and great works shape the "spirit" of the nation, guiding its life into a certain track. And a continuity of the character that flows from the culture also fosters the continuity of the culture.[48]

Kaufmann sums up the difference between his view and symbolic ideationalism's regarding how to account for the unified character of a culture thus:

> Absolute spirit as a universal power, the "national spirit" as the manifestation of a single "idea" or principle, the flickering of a unified soul finding

[48] "Be-kivshonah," 20–21.

> embodiment in a cultural body—all these are metaphysical conceptions, which do not arise from historical experience. But the creative human spirit, the power of creation of an ethnic group or the creative spirit of a nation, the power of objective spirit to create a stylistic imprint, the power of the idea in the sphere of objective spirit to shape the image of cultural values and fashion its symbols—all these are definitely empirical historical matters.[49]

But does Krochmal, as Kaufmann suggests, find the root of the unity possessed by a culture "in a common hidden essence embodied in all values and all times," in such metaphysical conceptions as "absolute spirit as a universal power, the 'national spirit' as the manifestation of a single 'idea' or principle, the flickering of a unified soul finding embodiment in a cultural body"? Not if we focus on Krochmal, the cultural historian.

As we saw, Krochmal, in writing (*qua* cultural historian) of the patterns of cultural development of the nations of the world, accounts for the "unity of imprint and style" that the cultures of those nations possess by claiming "that in each nation one spiritual attribute predominates, while the others are integrated into it and determined by it." But, as we also saw, the spiritual attributes possessed by a nation are the product of that nation's creative spirit. The unity found in national cultures, then, does *not*, for Krochmal, flow from "a common hidden 'essence' embodied in all values and all times," from "a unified soul finding embodiment in a cultural body," but, as Kaufmann himself maintains, develops precisely "from the power to exert influence latent in a creation once it has ventured forth from the sanctum of the creator's spirit and become embodied in values, in 'objectified spirit,'" from "the power of the idea in the sphere of objective spirit to shape the image of cultural values and fashion its symbols."

Again, one might wish to argue that while Krochmal accounts for the "unity of imprint and style" possessed by the cultures of the nations of the world by appealing to "the power to exert influence latent in a creation once it has ventured forth from the sanctum of the creator's spirit and become embodied in values," he, nevertheless, accounts for the "unity of formal stamp and ideational content" possessed by Israelite culture by indeed appealing to a metaphysical conception, namely, "absolute spirit as a universal power," and that here, indeed, the Israelite "national spirit" is "the manifestation of a single 'idea' or principle." And, in support of this contention, one might point to the very passage I cited earlier where Krochmal states that the divine wisdom "worked powerfully with it [the people] until all the spiritual attributes and qualities would become manifest and take shape within it integrated with each other in a balanced fashion, both in manner and form, with all of them [these spiritual attributes] attached to

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[49] "Be-kivshonah," 21.

God, may He be blessed, and relying on Him for their truth" (38). Do we not have here the assertion that "God, may He be blessed," that is, "absolute spirit as a universal power," is responsible for the unified nature of Israelite culture?

But, again, we have to see how Krochmal translates speculative, theological language into the language of collective cultural awareness. And here it is time to put together the entire passage, the two parts of which I have cited separately, where Krochmal writes of the "divine wisdom that guided and perfected the affairs" of the Jewish people in order to ensure that it become "a kingdom of priests, that is the teacher of the absolute Torahitic faith to the entire human species."

> It [the divine wisdom] worked powerfully with it [the people] until all the spiritual attributes and qualities would become manifest and take shape within it integrated with each other in a balanced fashion, both in manner and form, with all of them [these spiritual attributes] attached to God, may He be blessed, and relying on Him for their truth; that it to say, that with every action of our people and with every exalted and beneficent spirit that is made manifest and comes to light in our midst we should know in our hearts and acknowledge with our mouths that the living God is in our midst and all this derives from His hand, that is, that they are all rooted in Him and emanate from His spirit that encompasses all spiritual manifestations. (38)

While in the passage's first part, Krochmal, indeed, attributes the unified nature of Israelite culture to a metaphysical cause, namely to all the spiritual attributes that over the course of time would become manifest in the life of the Jewish people being "attached to God, may He be blessed, and relying on Him for their truth," in its second part he explains that by that he means that the unified nature of Israelite culture derives not so much from the spiritual attributes that over the course of time would become manifest in the life of the Jewish people being "attached to God," but from the Jewish people's *internal knowledge and outward* acknowledgment that these spiritual attributes "are all rooted in [God] and emanate from His spirit" While Krochmal's language here is certainly not a conceptually sophisticated as that of Kaufmann's and also has a much more pious ring, is he not, like Kaufmann, affirming here "the power of the idea in the sphere of objective spirit to shape the image of cultural values and fashion its symbols"?

All this is not to deny the differences existing between Krochmal and Kaufmann. Still, to conclude: With respect to Kaufmann's assertions that a people's cultural activity is a product of their spirit, that cultural and spiritual and not material factors are the main determinants of a people's destiny, and, coming to Jewish history, that the unified nature of the Jewish people's culture and that their special historical path and destiny were

owing to their religious belief, their monotheistic faith, granted Kaufmann was not a Hegelian, but he was a Krochmalian.[50]

[50] I would like to thank Job Jindo for his many incisive observations and suggestions, which contributed greatly to improving this essay. In particular, his trenchant criticisms of the essay's original version forced me to significantly revise it, at times modifying my theses, at times expanding upon and seeking to strengthen them. While I am certain that Jindo will still take issue with some (many?) of my claims, I hope he will agree that this final version of my essay is better than the original one, and—perhaps—goes part of the way to meeting his objections.

Judaism and Bible in the Worldview of Yehezkel Kaufmann*

Menahem HARAN

1

During his lifetime, especially in the last period of his life, Professor Yehezkel Kaufmann was known as a recluse, a vegetarian, abstaining from any form of entertainment. He would leave his apartment only rarely; and if he left, sometimes he would not leave before a certain hour of the evening, and sometimes only at night. Even presentations arranged in his honor did not interest him. Nevertheless, his eyes observed everything, everywhere, all the time, and at the right moment he could become a brilliant conversationalist. He imposed abstention on himself not because he did not appreciate the taste of good things. He did so because he tried with all his energies to increase and intensify his literary and scholarly activity. One could say without exaggeration that this was the greatest project of its kind in Jewish thought in the twentieth century. It is possible and also proper to say this, even though today it is already clear that some of the assumptions—central and peripheral—embedded in Kaufmann's project have not been corroborated.

Kaufmann's project encompassed two central topics—Judaism and Bible. In conversation he would say that our people had endowed mankind with two creations of genius, namely the Jewish religion and the Bible. These two accordingly became also the focus points of his activity. *Yahadut*** is here intended in both its meanings—the Jewish collective group (the secret of whose historical destiny demands an explanation) and the cultural, intellectual, and religious content that has maintained this group. As for Bible, he meant primarily defining the unique character of biblical

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* This article—translated from the original Hebrew publication *Mada'ei Ha-yahadut* 31 (World Union of Jewish Studies, 1991): 69–80 by Lenny Levin—is an expansion of remarks delivered in an evening program organized by the (Israel) National Academy of Sciences, commemorating Yehezkel Kaufmann's 101st birthday (17 Kislev 5751/ December 3–4, 1990). Kaufmann was born on 24 Kislev 5650, which was December 4, 1889 by the older Russian "Julian" calendar, and December 17 by the Gregorian calendar. But Kaufmann cared little for the change and on various occasions gave December 4 as his birth date even after the calendar change. But for the most part he preferred the Hebrew date. See Thomas Krapf, *Yehezkel Kaufmann: Ein Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg zur Theologie der Hebräischen Bibel* (Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum, 1990), 16.

** Translator's note: Hebrew *yahadut* (like German *Judentum*) has the dual meaning of "Judaism" and "Jewry," and can mean either the one or the other, or both, depending on context.

faith. In Kaufmann's mental world, these two topics are interwoven, because one cannot understand the historical destiny of Jewry without a correct definition of the substance of biblical religion, whereas a correct explanation of the character of biblical religion leads inevitably to a full understanding of the history of Jewry and Judaism. It follows that according to his method the biblical period contains the answer to all the "questions and perplexities" of the destiny of the Jewish collectivity.[1] It follows that Kaufmann's life project was a single one, but divided into two parts. Indeed, all the assumptions and conclusions connected with his biblical research were already subsumed in his first great work, *Exile and Alienation* (Tel Aviv, 5689–5690/1929–1930). He labored for about twenty years on this first work, and it took him about thirty years to produce the four volumes of *History of the Religion of the Bible* (Tel Aviv 5697–5716 / 1937–1956). But in the last analysis, all this comprised a single life project, continuous and extended.

In his student years, before he started the plan of his scholarly project, Kaufmann immersed himself in Jewish knowledge in every form from every period. In Odessa he studied in the yeshiva of Rav Tzair (Chaim Tchernowitz, 1871–1949), and in St. Petersburg he availed himself of the academic courses in Jewish and oriental studies under the auspices of Baron David Günzberg. In addition, it appears that he studied a good deal on his own. During World War I he studied philosophy, Bible and Semitic languages at the University of Bern. His doctoral dissertation there dealt with the question of sufficient reason according to Kant; it was published in Berlin in 1920. During the same year he published a short critical essay on Husserl.[2] He never published again on purely theoretical topics, but at its core his thinking was always rooted in philosophy. From the perspective of

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1 The expression "questions and perplexities" is taken from the writings of Aḥad Ha-ʿAm, who was of the opinion that the biblical period (as he expressed in the introduction to the first edition of *At the Crossroads*) was "the original period in which the spirit of our people was fashioned and developed in its own special way, and which holds the true key to the solution of all the 'questions and perplexities.'" (The quotation marks around "questions and perplexities" were in Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's original text.) Thanks to Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's nationalist influence, an aspiration arose in his circle to launch a modern scholarly study of the Bible in the Hebrew language. But the results were quite meager (if one does not count in this context the scientific study of the Bible composed by Abraham Kahane, in which one can find no overt trace of the nationalist ideas of the period). Paradoxically, it was Kaufmann who assumed responsibility for the aspiration that had motivated Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's circle and fulfilled it in large measure, even though his theoretical orientation was diametrically opposed to that of Aḥad Ha-ʿAm. Compare what I wrote about this in *Moznaim* 23 (5726/1966): 238–39, 24 (5727/1967): 54–55.

2 Jehezkel Kaufmann, *Eine Abhandlung über den zureichendend Grund—Erster Teil: Der Logische Grund* (Berlin: Emil Ebering, 1920); idem, "Das τρίτος ἄνθρωπος-Argument gegen die Eidos-Lehre," *Kant-Studien* 25 (1920): 214–19. The second portion of his doctoral dissertation was to have appeared afterward but was not published.

the twenty-seven years after his death it appears to me that historiosophic illumination is the strongest aspect of his thought. It is possible today to challenge his assumptions and conclusions in various areas of understanding the historical destiny of Jewry and the study of the Bible, but his historiosophic orientation remains in place. Furthermore, if some of his assumptions and conclusions had been formulated a bit more flexibly and a bit less definitively, they might be more defensible.

There are scholars whose systems seem to take shape independently, without our being able to say what was the external impulse that aroused them to take the position that they took. And there are scholars who need an external challenge in the form of a hypothetical phantom with whom they can wrestle. As far as we can tell, Kaufmann was of the second kind. In each of the two major areas of his work there were personalities who were viewed as authorities, and he took issue with their assumptions and criticized them. These were Aḥad Ha-ʿAm (Asher Zvi Hirsch Ginsberg, 1856–1927) in his conception of the substance of Jewish history and Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918) in the scholarly study of the Bible. It is impossible to know which came first, whether his critique of their authoritative methods generated his views, or his own fundamental insights led him to take a position against theirs. Perhaps it is even out of place to raise a question like this. But the fact remains that his conception was diametrically opposed to theirs. Therefore, in order to consider the special significance of Kaufmann's approach, it is best to present it in counterpoint to the positions that he opposed, which were dominant in their time and whose stamp can be recognized to the present time. We should say at the outset that Kaufmann had the better of the debate in both cases. He was absolutely right in his critique and penetrating refutation of their assumptions, even if it appears that he exaggerated slightly in the formulation of his position and in the course of the debate became inflexible in his stands. As we said, it is quite possible to state his positions with more flexibility and to tone down the obstinacy of his arguments. Doing so could even strengthen his overall thesis.

2

Let us begin by defining *Yahadut* in the two senses we have mentioned, the social-collective (Jewry) and the cultural-spiritual (Judaism). In the background of Kaufmann's conception was the theoretical method of Aḥad Ha-ʿAm, which underlay Jewish nationalist discourse in the early twentieth century and served as a basis (whether directly or indirectly) of public education for six or seven decades in the schools of Eretz Israel. The essence of the method, in short, was the fiat that Jewry is fundamentally a national

entity (in Hebrew, the term *'am*[***] is generally used, which has the same sense as the German *Volk*), but that the Jewish people is not situated in a normal state. The "garbs" and "instruments" of the "national spirit" of this collectivity have withered and do not permit of a full national existence. The national language is not spoken by all parts of the nation, and most of the nation does not yet dwell in its land. As a result of this, the creative powers of this collectivity have atrophied, but the "drive for national survival" stands guard to preserve this people in its uniqueness. The "drive for natural survival" created alternate instruments for preservation of the nation, and the primary of these is the Jewish religion, which includes the Torah and the regimen of mitzvot. According to Aḥad Ha-ʿAm, the "drive for national survival" operates on the "lower level of the psyche," under the threshold of consciousness, and is therefore in the category of an unconscious instinct.[3]

In truth, this is the hardest and most surprising point in the method of Aḥad Ha-ʿAm, that he takes the desire for natural survival to be an instinct, and a collective one at that. Thus one must derive from his method the surprising conclusion that such a primal human phenomenon as faith in the metaphysical—in the absolute, in God—is nothing more than a means to maintain something else, something relative, something that is only a consequence of historical circumstances and can come into being and disappear in the course of history. It is no surprise that this theory found its critics even within the nationalist camp. But the greatest and most vociferous opponent was Kaufmann. His critique of Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's thought surprised the Hebrew readers in one of his youthful pieces, when Kaufmann was a prodigy of 24 years old. That article contained many of the fundamental

[***] Translator's note: The most exact English translation of the term *'am* is "people" (singular noun, with the emphasis on familial-ethnic cohesion as opposed to political or territorial definition). However, this term is confusing in many contexts (as "people" is also used as the plural of "person"), and so *'am* is here rendered alternately "people" or "nation" for greater readability. As the term *'am* is used often in the Bible to refer to Israel, it can also have the connotation of a sacred religious community, and Kaufmann himself employs the term extensively. Thus the point at issue between Kaufmann and Aḥad Ha-ʿAm is not whether Jewry should be conceived as an *'am*—on this they are agreed—but whether *'am* itself should be construed in a secular-national or a religious sense. To complicate matters further, Kaufmann and Aḥad Ha-ʿAm agreed in construing the modern Jewish renaissance as having a primary spiritual-cultural character (whether secular or religious), as opposed to the "political Zionists" such as Leon Pinsker, Theodore Herzl, Max Nordau, and Ze'ev Jabotinsky, for whom political objectives (including a Jewish state) were primary from the start.

[3] The words in quotation marks are Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's. For a summary of Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's nationalist outlook, see *inter alia* Kaufmann, "The Principles of Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's Thought," *Hatekufa* 24 (5688/1928): 421–39 [in Hebrew]; id., *Ben netivot—perakim beḥeker ha-maḥshavah ha-le'umit* (Haifa: Reali School, 5704/1944), 61–91; M. Turtel, *Bisus ha-leumit be-kitvei Aḥad Ha-'Am* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 5702/1942); and Eliezer Schweid, "Aḥad Ha-ʿAm," in *EncJud* 2:443–47; and see below, n. 5.

ideas of his major works.[4] Afterward, his criticism grew deeper, sharper, and more penetrating.[5]

In response to Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's line of thinking, the explanation that Kaufmann gave to the secret of existence of the Jewish group under conditions of "exile and alienation" was far more realistic and rooted in the conditions of historical existence. It contains no trace of the mystification of the "drive for national existence." In his view, the group existence of Jewry is "normal" in the sense that every national group that was thrown into similar conditions would undergo the same historical process. It is a general rule that every national group that is displaced from its land into another environment, into another society, starts to undergo cultural and social assimilation until it disappears. When the Jewish group was uprooted from its land (including portions of it, in their geographical wanderings at later stages), the same process occurred. But in the special case of Judaism, the process did not reach completion, and the collective entity did not disappear. The reason for this was the fact that in every place the process was halted by a religious barrier. Individuals or groups could pass through the barrier of religion in one form or another, but the general rule was that in large communities religious change does not occur unless motivated by a positive spiritual attraction, and this did not happen.

The Jewish religion was able to serve as a protective shield to protect the Jewish group, because this religion was universal in substance and it could survive in any locale. If the potential embodied in this religion had been fully realized and the religion had embraced entire nations and large communities under its aegis, then the Jewish people would have disappeared. The national symbols connected with biblical Israel and rooted in the Jewish religion would not have served to prevent the spread of the religion, for the same symbols had been absorbed in Christianity as well. Even though in various times and places Judaism allowed religious conversion into Judaism, nevertheless for certain historical reasons the Jewish religion did not spread appreciably beyond the bounds of the Jewish group. Individuals were absorbed by conversion at various times and places, but not in sufficient numbers to dilute the character of the group. There was thus preserved behind the protective wall of the Jewish religion—universal in sub-

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4 Yehezkel Kaufmann, "Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's Judaism" (in Hebrew), *Hashiloaḥ* 30 (5674/1914): 249–71.

5 See especially Yehezkel Kaufmann, *Golah ve-Nekhar* (2 vols.; Tel Aviv: Devir, 1954–1961), 1:190–207, 2:348–59, 367–85 (plus additional index references). Compare n. 3 above. Kaufmann's critique includes the second stage in the development of Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's theory of nationalism, the stage in which Aḥad Ha-ʿAm was attracted to the idea that the existence of the Jewish people exemplifies a unique ethical ideal, which distinguishes Judaism from Christianity (and also, according to this assumption, from all other nations on earth), namely attachment to the idea of absolute justice. According to Aḥad Ha-ʿAm, after the full national renaissance in Eretz Israel, this ideal will be renewed (and not necessarily in religious form).

stance—a separate, peculiar tribe, connected by an umbilical cord to the Israelite people of the biblical period, and in effect its continuation.

3

There is no doubt that Kaufmann was right in seeing the Jewish religion as a protective wall for the survival of the Jewish people under conditions of exile and alienation, while emphasizing the universal character of this religion and denying absolutely the idea that Jewry's survival was due to a drive for national survival, even if one tried to compare it to an unconscious instinct. Still, I think it would have been better if he had been more flexible and tentative in some of his assumptions. The protective wall of Jewish religion was not always and everywhere impassible. This applied not only to physical annihilation, which at certain times and places was decreed on portions of this group, and from which religious faith could not save them. Even under conditions of relative prosperity, when the physical security of the group was well enough assured, many of its members were drawn off, and portions of the people disappeared, or nearly so.[6] It is better to say that the Jewish religion was a primary factor for preserving this group, but not absolutely or exclusively. If the Jewish religion had been an nearly absolutely powerful factor, the Jewish community would have increased by now to hundreds of millions in size, if not more. There is no doubt that side by side with the Jewish religion as a protective wall for group survival there also operated the fact that in every age and in every situation the center of gravity of Jewish existence moved to another geographic region, and Jewish communities could always establish themselves in regions of economic and cultural prosperity.

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[6] The Greek-speaking Jewry of Egypt, for example, faded and disappeared before the end of Roman rule. On the story of the demise of this diaspora, see Victor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (trans. S. Applebaum; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1959), especially 382–92. "Whatever the sword did not consume was nibbled away by assimilation" (ibid., 366). See also id., *Ha-yehudim be-Mitzrayim bitekufat ha-hellenistit ha-romit le'or ha-papyrologia* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 5723/1963), 206–08. The Hebrew papyri that appear in Egypt from the second century BCE onward are apparently a sign of a community of Jewish population from Eretz Israel and not necessarily a national revival among Egyptian Jewry. As a result of cultural and social assimilation, the Jewish community in central- and western-European Jewry in the second half of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century was eaten alive, despite religious difference. A similar outcome resulted from the conversions of Jews in Poland in the mid-eighteenth century; see Maier Balaban, *Letoledot ha-Tenu'ah ha-Frankit* (Tel Aviv: Devir, 5694/1934), 1:80–81, 89, 92–93). Were it not for the increase enjoyed by the Jewish community in Italy toward the end of the Middle Ages, as a result of immigration of Jews from Germany and Spain, it is possible that this community would not have survived (see below).

Let us not forget that at the beginning of the Middle Ages, from the ninth century onward, when the character of Ashkenazic Jewry in northern France and the Rhine valley had been established and it started to spread out from there, it comprised a small percentage of all the Jews in the world. From the eleventh century until the expulsion from Spain, Sephardic Jews comprised not less than half of all Jewry, and they were the most active part of it.[7] From the seventeenth century onward, after Sephardic Jews had been scattered to various countries, their relative numbers diminished. By the outbreak of World War II, Ashkenazic Jews comprised ninety percent of world Jewry. By contrast, the eastern Jewish communities who had never passed through Europe, such as the Jews of the Caucasus, Persia and the other countries of south-central Asia, Yemen, etc. never became a major proportion of world Jewry. Jews of the Mediterranean coasts, from north-central Africa to Turkey and Greece, yielded to Sephardic influence or became Sephardic by virtue of the wave of immigration that reached them from the Spanish exiles. Correspondingly, the waves of Jewish immigration from Germany to northern Italy, especially in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and from Spain to the Papal States,[8] did not suffice to make it a major community, even though they reinforced the Jewish community in Italy and comprised a new stratum in it. The numbers of world Jewry only grew to the size of several millions at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. One may therefore say that behind the protective wall of religion, Jewish existence wavered between the danger of perpetual diminution and the chance of occasional expansion (a growth that occurred especially in modern times).

Moreover, Kaufmann was surely right that one cannot explain Jewish existence only on the basis of the drive for national survival. Even behind the protective shield of the Jewish religion, one certainly cannot describe this drive as implanted "in the lower level of the psyche." Nevertheless, one may concede that within the Jewish group there operated also genuine national motivations that are not simply a function of the religious factor. Nature knows of borderline phenomena that do not fit neatly into existing categories (such as creatures on the border line between plant and animal, or individuals on the border between male and female), or that unite opposite qualities within themselves. Surely the definition of a people or nation (*ʿam, Volk*), in its typical manifestation, is not a good fit for the Jewish group in its condition of exile and alienation. But it also does not fit the definition of a religious community according to the usual paradigm. And even though it does not conform to the paradigm either of nation or of religious community in their usual forms (or maybe it partakes of both), this does not negate the fact that in the course of the generations this group

7 Compare: Cecil Roth, "Sephardim," in *EncJud* 14:1171.

8 On these migrations, see for instance Attilio Milano, "Italy," in *EncJud* 9:1122, 1124.

manifested striking unity and a sufficient measure of cohesion to render it a singular body with its own history (it is possible that Kaufmann might agree to this formulation).

And if despite the basic universal character of the Jewish religion, which cannot be disputed, the religion did not spread much beyond the bounds of the Jewish collectivity, it appears that there is no need to explain this fact exclusively by appealing to external historical circumstances, and it is better to seek the cause also in the qualified aversion that this religion displayed to accepting converts. Even though Judaism intermittently allowed itself to exercise religious conversion and occasionally pursued it actively (in fact, being the first to create this religious institution in the period of the Hasmoneans), nevertheless, for the most part conversion in Judaism stood under the sign of hesitation and restraint. Most of the Eastern Christian churches (Nestorian, Jacobite, Maronite, Chaldean, and others) practice no religious conversion at all, and their churches are simultaneously religious communities and quasi-national groups. Moreover, Jewish sects that originated in the East (Samaritans and Karaites) do not recognize religious conversion at all. In this respect, Judaism overall constitutes a hybrid of a missionary religion with an "eastern" element that seeks to refrain from performing religious conversion. The Talmudic rabbis gave us sayings on both sides of the issue, some in praise of conversion and others disparaging it. On the one hand they said, "The Holy and Blessed One exiled Israel among the nations for the sole purpose of attracting converts to join them" (*b. Pes.* 87b); "The Holy and Blessed One said, 'The names of converts are as dear to me as wine libations poured on the altar' (*Num. Rab.* 8:1); "A gentile who converts to Judaism and studies Torah is like the High Priest" (ibid. 13:15; compare *Tanḥ. Vayakhel* 8). On the other hand, they were able to say, "Proselytes are as unpleasant to Israel as a scab" (*b. Yev.* 47b and elsewhere); "The proselytes who left Egypt with Moses were the ones who made the Golden Calf and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel'" (*Exod. Rab.* 42:6); "Don't trust a proselyte for twenty-four generations, because he keeps his yeast" (that is, he retains his evil tendencies; *Yal. Shim'oni* on Ruth § 601).[9]

All these things and their like are aggadic lore. The halakha, in principle, did not make entry of foreigners into the congregation of Israel impossible and certainly did not close the door in the face of one "who receives the yoke of the Holy and Blessed One in love and reverence and converts for the sake of Heaven" (ibid.). But the aggada gave explicit expression to an attitude of ambivalence toward conversion, an attitude that from the outset had the potential of encouraging or discouraging it. It is likely that just as in certain periods the tendency to encourage it predominated (the

[9] Compare this to the texts and interpretations cited, for example, in Bernard J. Bamberger, *Proselytism in the Talmudic Period* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press), 149–173. His evaluation appears too apologetic to me.

Hasmoneans in the days of John Hyrcanus and Alexander Jannai, the late Roman imperial period, the Khazars, conversion activities in North Africa and Arabia), so, too, there were periods when the tendency to discourage predominated. And in any case, it was sufficient for the discouraging tendency to be manifest in successive periods, or at any rate the ambivalence that characterized the attitude toward conversion, in order to ensure that Judaism would not expand much beyond the bounds of the Jewish group, and that this collectivity would be preserved as a special, separate social entity.

4

According to Kaufmann's conception, one cannot understand the destiny of the Jewish collectivity in its state of exile and alienation unless we say that before the destruction of the First Temple the core substance of monotheism and universalism was already deeply rooted in the Israelite religion. Here Kaufmann's thought on the historic destiny of Jewry becomes joined to his distinctive conception of biblical scholarship, and here he is especially critical of the tendency in biblical studies that is called the "Wellhausen school." This school was based on the assumption that was proposed several decades before Wellhausen by the scholar Vatke whose name is scarcely remembered today.[10] According to this assumption, one can explain the stages of development of biblical faith in conformity to Hegel's principles of dialectical philosophy, that every phenomenon in intellectual-spiritual history is rooted in a prior phenomenon and developed out of the phenomenon that preceded it. In keeping with this method, the monotheistic worldview developed out of a preceding idolatrous worldview. Israelite religion itself did not possess a monotheistic faith, neither in its inception nor until the end of the period of the First Temple. In the second half of the First Temple period, the classical prophets preached on behalf of monotheism, but this was still a conception of ethical monotheism (not cosmic monotheism), that is to say, a belief that the God of Israel demanded from the individual and from the national group behavior in accord with principles of justice and morality, and that God judged them according to these principles. In the same period this was still the idea of individuals and not

[10] Wilhelm Vatke, *Die biblische Theologie wissenschaftlich dargestellt: Die Religion des Alten Testaments nach den kanonischen Büchern entwickelt* (vol. 1; Berlin: Bethge, 1835). Wellhausen himself acknowledged that he received "the most and the best" ("*das meiste und das beste"*) from Vatke. See Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (trans. J. Sutherland Black and Allan Menzies; Edinburgh: A. & C. Black, 1885), 13. As to the question of the connection between Hegel's philosophical-historical principles and Vatke's work, see especially Lothar Perlitt, *Vatke und Wellhausen (*BZAW 94; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1965), 31–57, 93–104.

the legacy of the entire national collective. The tendency to monotheistic belief increased with the destruction of the Samaritan kingdom, and after the destruction of Jerusalem the entire people was converted to this faith. That is to say, monotheistic belief is in the last analysis a product of paganism, which existed first, whereas the dominance of monotheism over the Israelite collective was the result of the destructions of Samaria and Jerusalem.

These, in short, are Kaufmann's principal answers to the assumptions of the Wellhausen school. First of all, he emphasizes that nowhere do we find a case of an idolatrous worldview developing into monotheism, or that the destruction of a national group would change its faith into a monotheistic one. Furthermore, classical prophecy proposed the idea of the primacy of ethics but did not change the basic character of Israelite faith. The prophetic movement appeared on the basis of the assumptions of the popular faith, and the prophets expressed their demands in the name of the God of that same popular faith. It follows that classical prophecy was not a factor for transforming the Israelite religion into a monotheistic faith. Furthermore, Kaufmann asserted that monotheistic faith was in no way a development out of paganism, and it is likely that in this respect he is speaking as a neo-Kantian. According to his method, monotheism is an absolutely different worldview than the pagan worldview. It is self-enclosed and did not flow from any prior developmental stage. This conception came in a flash in the consciousness of the first prophet-emissary (Moses) and in this sense it is even impossible to explain how it came about. In the last analysis, every spark of a new creation is inexplicable. One can describe the tangible historical circumstances that existed at that time. But one cannot explain the primal flash of lightning, mysterious and creative, at the foundation of the new conception.

The definition that Kaufmann gives for monotheism is not arithmetical in its essence. According to his view, the difference between paganism and monotheism is not just in the number of gods, but it is the difference between a mythological worldview and a non-mythological one. A mythological worldview assumes the existence of a primal world order that has a framework of cosmic laws to which even the gods are bound, and so the gods are subject to changes and life-events (such as birth, death, love, hate, weakness, empowerment) and it is possible to tell "myths" about them, that is to say, tales of events in the divine sphere, whereas a non-mythological worldview believes in a god who is absolutely sovereign, not bound to any law, and whose will is the source of all becoming and all reality. This definition of monotheism as non-mythological is close to the definition that Hermann Cohen gave in his old age in his book *Religion of Reason Out of the Sources of Judaism*, which was published posthumously in 1919. Nevertheless, I do not believe that there was any direct dependency of Kaufmann on this neo-Kantian philosopher from Marburg. If there were such a

dependency, Kaufmann would have had no compunction about declaring so explicitly. Indeed, they do not use similar terminology, and in all Cohen's explications of this matter he never uses the terms "mythological" or "non-mythological." We mentioned above (§ 2) that Kaufmann's basic ideas are implicit in his youthful dissertation that was published five or six years before the appearance of Cohen's book.[11] It follows that the two came to similar thoughts independently of each other, or that something in the *Zeitgeist* came to expression in their writings. At most, it is possible that an idea that appeared in Hermann Cohen's writings reinforced an idea that had already found its place in Kaufmann's thought.

5

Kaufmann's general historiosophical view seeks to find support on several assumptions or conclusions connected to the problems of literary and historical research of the Bible. Such problems include: the redaction of literary corpora (especially the Deuteronomic corpus, including the historical books) and the dating of the sources comprising these corpora; the fidelity of the testimonies embedded in the sources; the process of settlement of the Israelites in the land and the historical relation between Israel and the Canaanite factor; the historical relation between Israelite religion and the mythological religions that existed in the surrounding countries. I have no doubt that with regard to a certain part of these problems it is possible and even proper to arrive at conclusions different from Kaufmann's—but this does not entail rejecting his historisophic outlook in its entirety. On the contrary—a more flexible, tentative, and different formulation of the literary and historical facts is apt to provide support to the overall historiosophic outlook. We will spend time on some examples, but only in summary fashion.

It was Kaufmann's assumption that Israel comprised a separate arena of national creativity, self-enclosed, and entirely monotheistic. According to his argument, the Bible does not recognize the pagan-mythological conception at all. For this purpose, Kaufmann was forced to adopt a prior assumption—that during the biblical period there was no symbiosis of two ethnic elements, the Israelite and the Canaanite. Modern biblical research deter-

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[11] Hermann Cohen, *Religion of Reason Out of the Sources of Judaism* (trans. Simon Kaplan; 2nd ed.; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995). The German original appeared in 1919. As we said, Kaufmann spent the years of World War I in Bern, Switzerland. He spent the next year in Lausanne. From the beginning of 1920 he dwelt in Berlin. It follows that Kaufmann's and Cohen's paths never crossed. But there could have been some point of contact in the air, so to speak. For the definition that Cohen gave to monotheism, see Cohen, Religion, 35–49. On Kaufmann's independence of Cohen (in connection with the polemic against Aḥad Ha-ʿAm), see also Krapf, *Yehezkel Kaufmann,* 43–44.

mines that the Hebrew tribes that arrived from the wilderness mingled with the population of the Land of Canaan, and from this mixture was formed the new national entity of Israel. (Most recently, even more radical views have been advanced on this issue, for instance that no nomad factor entered the land from outside, and that the national transformation was based on a "peasants' revolt.") The demand to wipe out the Canaanites, expressed in the Bible, is explained as a projection of national sentiments that appeared in certain ideological circles in a period after the settlement, and it is assumed that they contain no reliable expression of the process of settlement itself. It is Kaufmann's position that the biblical narrative regarding the conquest is correct in its essentials. Even though it is suffused with violence and has no idealistic elements, it harbors the historic truth that a short time after the conquest the Canaanite factor in the land had been entirely—or almost entirely—eliminated.

But what shall we do, when in addition to the archeological findings, which are not always reconcilable with the biblical tradition concerning the conquest, we find explicit testimony in the Bible itself, that after the wave of conquest there remained Canaanite enclaves in various parts of the land? These enclaves are compiled from lists of cities, including large and central cities such as Gezer, Beth Shean, Taanach, Megiddo, Akko, and Jerusalem (Josh 15:63, 16:10, 17:11–12; Judg 1:21, 27–33). Concerning other tribes, whose landholds were found in the margins of the Israelite settlement borders, the text even says that they dwelt "in the midst of the Canaanites" (Judg 1:32–33). An appreciable portion of the cities mentioned became Israelite only in the period of the united kingdom.[12] On the other hand, a key central city such as Shechem is not mentioned at all in the narratives of the conquest, and there is no doubt that it was not included in the first wave of conquest, because according to the Bible this city was destroyed only in the days of Abimelech (Judg 9:45), and at that time it still had Canaanite inhabitants (9:28, and compare 9:27: "They came to *their gods' house*"). This is nicely confirmed by the archeological excavations in Shechem, which attest to its continuity of settlement from the fifteenth century BCE to around 1100, when the city was destroyed and was not rebuilt until the tenth century BCE, that is to say, in the period of the unified monarchy.[13] If

[12] The phrasing, "And it came to pass, when the Israelites became strong," in connection with the Canaanite enclave in Manasseh (Josh 17:13; Judg 1:28) refers without a doubt to the period of the United Kingdom, when the enclave became tributary (but see Y. Kaufmann, *Sefer Yehoshua* (Jerusalem: Qiryat Sefer, 5719/1959), 205; *Sefer Shofetim* (Jerusalem: Qiryat Sefer, 5722/1962), 86). Similarly, Jerusalem and Gezer became Israelite cities only in the period of David (2 Sam 5:6–9) and Solomon (1 Kgs 9:15–17). For the turning of "all the people remaining of the Amorites" into tributary laborers in Solomon's time, we have corroborating testimony in 1 Kgs 9:20–21.

[13] See what I wrote in my article, "The periods of Shechem," *Tziyon* 38 (1973): 16–24. Even Kaufmann (*Sefer Shofetim*, 207; cf. 10–11) was forced to admit the existence of "an impoverished remnant" of Canaanites in Shechem (and see my article, 19 n. 43).

these considerations are not sufficient, let us also recall the testimony of the language of the Israelite tribes, which is identical in all respects with the Canaanite language (or at the very least is a Canaanite dialect), so that the prophet explicitly calls it "the speech of Canaan" (Isa 19:18).[14] One should not imagine that the Israelite tribes adopted the Canaanite language before settling in the land.

We are forced to conclude that Israel of the biblical period was composed of the symbiosis of two ethnic elements. One of them, which arrived from outside, provided the new people with its religious faith, impassioned and zealous (which, with certain changes of form, would eventually turn into the religion of a collective that was scattered across the whole world, and in the course of time would be transformed into two additional religions). The second element bequeathed to the new people its language and material culture. Examples of similar phenomena are not lacking in various places and times. Sometimes the conqueror gives its language to the conquered, and sometimes it receives the language of the conquered but provides them with a new national identity (or even is absorbed into the conquered people without leaving a trace of its original culture). It is certainly possible for the conqueror to impart a new religious faith to the conquered. All these possibilities are decided by combinations of varying factors, dictated by the size of the contending bodies (the conquerors and the conquered), their spiritual and physical vitality, and the strength of their determination—until a new equilibrium is established. But there is nothing in the confrontation that occurred in the course of the conquest of the land that would rule out the assumption that the religious faith of the conquerors, known to us now in its biblical formulation, was originally remote from any mythological worldview.

6

In order to prove that there was no symbiosis of two ethnic factors in the background of Israel's appearance, Kaufmann was forced to accept the testimony of the books of Joshua and Judges on the matter of the conquest of the land in a simplistic fashion verging on fundamentalism. It is no accident that he rushed to write his commentaries on Joshua and Judges before he managed to complete his composition of his *History of the Israelite Religion* (and the composition remained incomplete). Kaufmann boxed himself in with extreme assumptions with regard to the composition and redac-

[14] In two places (2 Kgs 18:26, 28 = Isa 36:11, 13; Neh 13:24) it is called *yehudit*—the "language of Judah." Apparently the reference is to the local dialect. The appellation "Hebrew" is given to it only in Greek sources from the end of the Second Temple period (introduction to the Greek translation of Ben Sira: Josephus *A.J.* 1, Introd.:2 and 1:2; Rev 9:1, 16:16) and in rabbinic texts (*m. Yad.* 4:5; *y. Meg.* 1:11 [71b]).

tion of these books (and also of the Book of Samuel), and it is impossible to accept his assumptions from a literary and historical standpoint. His position forces him, first of all, to argue that there is no connection of authorship among the four historical books comprising the "Early Prophets," that each of them is a complete and independent literary work, and that they were each composed at a different time. Indeed, the Deuteronomist style that is abundant in these books is not in itself proof of a late date. As long as this style does not include the demand for centralizing the ritual, says Kaufmann, it is early and its earliest strata are rooted in the period before the judges. (But in Kings, which contains the demand for centralizing the ritual, the style itself is very late.) The beginning of the priestly style, which comes in large chunks in Joshua, takes us back to the beginning of Israelite history. These arguments open the way for Kaufmann to arrive at the strange conclusion that the Book of Joshua, the canonical book before us now, is "*very close* [Kaufmann's emphasis] to the events that it narrates" and "was necessarily put together at the start of the period of the judges [that means, immediately after the conquest]." Similarly the framework of the Book of Judges is "very close to the period of the judges," whereas the sources for the book "have their origin in the actual period of the judges."[15]

Thus we find that Kaufmann turned his back on one of the fundamental findings of modern biblical scholarship, namely, the finding that the historical writings [Joshua through Kings—the "Early Prophets"] are not separate works but a continuous composition that was edited by the Deuteronomist's pen. What follows from this is that the time of the redaction of the composition could not have been earlier than the last event mentioned in it, which is the liberation of Jehoiachin from his prison in the thirty-seventh year of his exile (2 Kings 25:27, that is to say, 561 BCE). But the sources of the composition surely preceded this date, and the first of these dates back to the beginning of the Israelite monarchy (and possibly part of it prior to then). But given that at the time of the redaction of the composition it was impossible to include it all on a single scroll, they divided it into secondary sections, each of which had its own closed thematic circle, according to the rule that was observed in the ancient world (and in fact even in more recent times). The continuity that runs through this composition from beginning to end was already pointed out by Spinoza, in his characteristic manner, in chapter 8 of his *Theological-Political Treatise*, and full, energetic expression of this view was given around 190 years ago by Wilhelm De Wette (1780–1849) in his youthful work, *Dissertatio critica-exegetica.* From that time onward, this finding has not been refuted, despite the cumulative efforts and broadening of biblical studies and the major transformations that

[15] See Kaufmann, *Sefer Yehoshua,* 59–61, 79–80. (On p. 79 he says that in the hands of the author of the Book of Joshua—who operated, as we said, at the beginning of the period of the judges—was "an early Deuteronomic *literature* [emphasis mine] that included also laws, and he cited excerpts from it.") See also *Sefer Shofetim* 33, 50.

have occurred in it over the years.[16] It would have been better for Kaufmann to follow the critical path and to agree with the assumptions that had already been given sufficient philological evidence. Even so, his historiosophic building would have been able to stand sturdily, and as we said—it would even have been stronger without relying on a support that was unreasonable from the start.

Kaufmann's prior assumptions—that Israel was a closed sphere without any knowledge of a mythological world view, and that at the background of Israel's appearance there was no symbiosis of two ethnic elements—were connected with an additional assumption, that Israel had no religious syncretism. For the phenomenon of religious syncretism in Israel, which the Bible opposed, of course, one can apparently find hints in the Bible, even though Kaufmann tended to dismiss most of these hints.[17] Regarding the dismissal of many of those hints an interlocutor could quibble and raise questions even from the outset. But at the time that Kaufmann argued his case on this matter it was difficult to predict that after a certain time the inscriptions of Kuntillet ʿAjrud would come to light, among which are not only expressions of blessing associated with the Tetragrammaton alongside the name of Baal, but also the astonishing combination "YHWH (…) and his Asherah." Not only that, but this combination itself would later be clarified by the inscription that was discovered at Khirbet el-Qôm, west of Hebron, that is to say, in the innermost region of the kingdom of Judah.[18] The discovery in Kuntillet ʿAjrud recalls the emendation to Hosea 14:9 that

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[16] Concerning all this, see my article: "Some of the Problems of the Composition of the Book of Kings and the Books of the Early Prophets," *Tarbiz* 37 (1968): 1–14. On the need to divide the Deuteronomic corpus into secondary parts and the closed thematic circles in each of them, see my article, "The Size of Biblical Books and the Scope of the Books of the Torah and Early Prophets," *Tarbiz* 53 (1984): 346–52.

[17] See Kaufmann, *Toledot ha-Emunah ha-Yisre'elit* (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv: Bialik and Devir, 1937-1056), 1:421–2, 591–3, 661–81; 2:221–38, 267–8; 3:95–7, 115–7, 382–91, etc. Kaufmann admits that there existed public rituals to Baal and Asherah in the days of Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kgs 16:32–33; 18:19–40, etc.), in the days of Athaliah (2 Kgs 11:18), and the introduction of the statue of Asherah into the Jerusalem Temple in the days of Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:3, 7–8, etc.). But he emphasizes that these rituals were established for political reasons and had no popular basis. But it is reasonable that the royal endorsement given to these rituals could only increase their importance and not diminish it.

[18] See André Lemaire, "Les Inscriptions de Khirbet El-Qôm et l'Ashérah de Yhwh," *RB* 84 (1977): 597–603. For other readings of the inscription in its entirety, see the reviews of Ziony Zevit, "The Khirbet el-Qôm Inscription Mentioning a Goddess," *BASOR* 255 (1984): 39–47, and Saul Olyan, *Asherah and the Cult of Yahweh in Israel* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988). Khirbet el-Qôm has been identified with the biblical Makkedah. On the inscription of Kuntillet ʿAjrud, see Ze'ev Meshel, *Kutillet ʿAjrud* (Israel Museum, catalog #175; Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 5738/1978); and the review of studies by Olyan, *Asherah*, 25–33. It has been suggested that the form *asherato* with the third-person inflection could not signify the goddess herself but only the ritual object, the tree (which could symbolize the goddess), and this objection has substance.

Wellhausen suggested a century ago—an emendation that at its time appeared strange but in the light of the inscription appears to be quite reasonable. In place of *ani 'aniti va-ashurenu* ("I answer and I look upon him"), which is a senseless sentence,[****] Wellhausen suggested the reading *"*I am his Anat and his Asherah." According to this, the words are spoken as a polemic from YHWH's mouth, and "only a prophet of the stature of Hosea could permit himself to put such words in YHWH's mouth."[19] On the other hand, the idolatrous or syncretistic character of the religion of the Jews of Elephantine is far from certain, as some scholars have already demonstrated.[20] Kaufmann took a fine position regarding the Jews of Elephantine and emphasized that the Jews of Elephantine "consider themselves to be worshippers of YHWH (i.e., Yahu) and only to Him do they build a temple."[21]

In any case, it is true also on this issue of religious syncretism that Kaufmann would had done better to soften his stance and to make it more flexible, without having to retract his overall historiosophical outlook. For it is impossible to deny that Gnostic elements, and even outright mythological elements, succeeded in the course of history in finding a foothold in Christianity and also in Judaism. In spite of this, these religions did not cease being monotheistic in their primary embodiment and by their own definition. It is not impossible, therefore, that on the margins of Israelite religion of the biblical period "wild growths" could find a place, without penetrating into the Bible and without uprooting the overall non-mythological character of the religion.

[****] Translator's note: i.e., senseless in the context. The verse reads: *Ephraim mah li od ba'atzabim [ani 'aniti va'ashurenu] ani kivrosh ra'anan mimmeni peryekha nimtza* (Ephraim: What have I to do with idols? [disputed phrase] I am like an evergreen cypress. From me comes your fruit.)

19 Wellhausen's emendation was accepted by Eissfeldt (and the quotation is from his words) and other scholars. See Julius Wellhausen, *Kleine Propheten übersetzt und erklärt* (Berlin: Reimer, 1892) *ad loc.;* Otto Eissfeldt, *Kleine Schriften* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1973), 5:10; and compare Moshe Weinfeld, *Shnaton* 4 (1980): 280–2.

20 Weinfeld is not of this opinion (ibid. 281). But Anat-Yahu, in whose name Menahem ben Shalom swears (CAP 44, line 3) and whom Weinfeld mentions, was conceived apparently as a specific embodiment of Yahu and served in household ritual. The impression of Anat in the lives of Elephantine Jews was meager, and her name does not appear as an element in personal names. As for the offering to Anat-Beth-El (CAP 22, line 125), it was apparently not included among the offerings to Yahu, the God of the Jews of Elephantine, as Moshe David (Umberto) Cassuto demonstrated in *Sifrut Miqrait vesifrut kena'anit* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 5732/1972), 1:279–86. For a general summary of the religion of the Jews of Elephantine, with reservations about defining it as syncretistic, see Bezalel Porten, *Archives from Elephantine* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), 173–279.

21 Kaufmann, *Toledot,* 1:681. Cassuto, *Sifrut*, 1:279, blamed him unjustly for accepting the "prevailing view" that the religion of the Elephantine Jews was idolatrous.

One of the sages of the Middle Ages said: "The essence of every thing in the world is its center."[22] Kaufmann did not recognize the existence of the peripheries, but the definitions that he gave for the phenomena of the center, or the center of the phenomena, were quite correct and captured the heart of the phenomena.

[22] *Kitvei Rabbenu Bahya [ben Asher ibn Halawa]* (ed. Chaim Dov Chavel; Jerusalem, 5730/1970), *Kad ha-Kemaḥ, Shavu'ot*, 404.

III.

Kaufmann and the Bible

The Rise, Decline, and Renewal of the Biblical Revolution

Israel KNOHL

1

The predominantly accepted view among biblical scholars posits that Israelite religion developed in a linear fashion, from polytheism to monotheism. This was a gradual shift from the belief in many gods, to the belief in one God, Yahweh, and the complete negation of the existence of all other deities.

According to this view, the first stage of this process was the polytheistic stage in which Yahweh was one of a family of Canaanite gods. According to scholarship, this stage is reflected in the version of Moses' Song as found in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Septuagint. On the basis of this version of Deut 32:8–9, scholars contend that Yahweh was one of the sons of Elohim, or in other words one the children of El or Elyon.[1] A similar argument is based on Psalm 82.[2] This polytheistic stage is corroborated, according to many scholars, by the inscriptions found in Khirbet el-Qom and Kuntillet Ajrud, where the expression, "For Yahweh and his Asherah" (ליהוה ולאשרתה), is recorded.[3] According to these scholars this is evidence that the goddess Asherah was considered to be Yahweh's consort.

The next stage in the development of Israelite religion is monolatry. It is at this point, as the theory goes, that Israelites were required to worship Yahweh exclusively. This requirement, however, did not preclude the existence of other gods. An expression of this monolatry is evident, for example, in the Song on the Sea, in the expression, "Who is like you among the gods, O Yahweh" (Exod 15:11). This verse and others like it (e.g., Pss 77:14; 89:7) do not deny the existence of other gods; they simply elevate Yahweh above other gods. This monolatrous view is also reflected, perhaps, in the second of the Ten Commandments, in the injunction: "You

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1 See, for instance, Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 48–49.

2 See Smith, *Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 48–49, and the recent discussion of Peter Machinist, "How Gods Die, Biblically and Otherwise," in *Reconsidering the Concept of Revolutionary Monotheism* (ed. Beate Pongratz-Leisten; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 189–240.

3 See, Smith, *Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 73–74.

shall have no gods but me" (Exod 20:2). In this case as well, there is no abnegation of other deities, just a prohibition against their worship.[4]

Scholars who accept this paradigm of linear development argue that the standard-bearers of this monolatrous exclusivity were the prophets of the ninth century B.C.E, such as Elijah, Elisha, and their followers in later periods, such as Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah.[5] However, the majority of the Israelites did not accept this command to worship Yahweh exclusively and continued to worship other gods in addition to Yahweh.

The third and final stage according to this paradigm of linear progression is complete monotheism. This stage is reflected primarily in the prophecies of Deutero-Isaiah. At this point in time the existence of all gods is repudiated, except for Yahweh: "I am first, and I am last, and there is no god except for me" (Isa 44:6), "I am Yahweh and there is no god but me…for there is none but me, I am Yahweh and there is none other" (Isa 45:5-6). In this view, Israelite religion reaches its peak at the end of the Babylonian period, after a long period of development.

This paradigm suggests that before the Babylonian exile most Israelites still accepted polytheism in some form. But following the crisis of exile and destruction, many of those who were displaced to Babylon decided to divest themselves of idolatry. Only during the Babylonian exile did the Israelite majority become monotheistic.

2

Yehezkel Kaufmann was critical of two aspects of this theory of linear progression:

1. The definition of what constituted Israelite monotheism.
2. The notion of the gradual development of Israelite religion.

Kaufmann objected to seeing the issue of many gods as opposed to one god as the defining the main aspect of biblical monotheism. Thus, for example regarding Freud's book, *Moses and Monotheism* he makes the following claim: "The prevalent premise is that the central aspect of monotheism is the belief in one god. But in truth monotheism is not an arithmetic concept, and the number of gods is not the governing principle. Oneness is only one aspect of the essence of monotheism, the crux being a belief in one god who does not represent any natural power, and that no power of nature

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[4] See William H. C. Propp, *Exodus* (2 vols.; AB; New York: Doubleday, 1999–2006), 2:167.

[5] This is the "Yhwh-alone" party according to Morton Smith's *Palestine Parties and Politics That Shaped the Old Testament* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971).

governs him."[6] This excerpt accords with Kaufmann's definition of biblical belief in his book, The Religion of Israel: "The basic idea of Israelite religion is that God is supreme over all. There is no realm above or beside him to limit his absolute sovereignty. He is utterly distinct from, and other than, the world."[7] It is through this lens that Kaufmann explicates the principles of polytheism, which he views as absent from the Bible.

He argues that there is no theogony in the Bible. There is no account of God's coming into being through any material medium and there is no account of God being born. Moreover, the myths of the Bible do not include some of the central motifs of polytheistic legends. God has no family history. God has no father, no brother, and no son rooted in reality or conceived through God's seed. God does not die or procreate. He is not lustful and does not have sexual relations, nor does he have any sexually conceived offspring.[8]

In other words, Kaufmann dismisses the prevalent view which sees the shift from many gods to one god as the central axis of the development of biblical religion. According to him this aspect of monotheism is secondary. The central aspect of the biblical belief system is not the belief in the oneness of the divinity, but rather the existence of a supreme divinity divorced from nature and natural laws.

The second facet of Kaufmann's disagreement with the accepted views on the development of biblical religion is the idea of progression. Namely, at the center of the accepted paradigm is a linear development in many stages. According to Kaufmann, Moses was the first prophet who conceived of the basic idea of biblical religion and the first to teach it to the Israelites.[9] In Moses' time the Israelite tribes were in the midst of a religious struggle between monotheistic ideas and the polytheistic practices that had been the norm beforehand. The battle for supremacy was decided quickly and Moses' monotheism won out. This lightning victory is parallel, according to Kaufmann, to Muhammad's victory against the idolatrous tribes of the Arabian Peninsula.[10]

According to Kaufmann this religious revolution occurred at the very dawn of Israelite history and ultimately led to the elimination of polytheism in Israel. Based on this view, Kaufmann casts doubt on the historical evidence the books of Judges and Kings offer concerning idolatrous practices during the period of Judges and during the monarchy.[11] Polytheism at that

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6 See Yehezkel Kaufmann, *Mi-Kivshona Shel Ha-Yetzirah Ha-Mikrait* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1966), 254 (Hebrew, my translation). See also Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel* (trans. and abridged by Moshe Greenberg; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 226–27.

7 Kaufmann, *Religion of Israel*, 60.

8 Kaufmann, *Religion of Israel*, 67–72.

9 Kaufmann, *Religion of Israel*, 223–31.

10 Kaufmann, *Religion of Israel*, 231 n. 8.

11 Kaufmann, *Religion of Israel*, 138–47, 260–61.

time was a fringe phenomenon, according to him, and was practiced by a small minority of Israelites. The exception to this was the reign of Ahab, who, under the influence of his wife Jezebel of Sidon, made the worship of Baal the state religion.[12]

This view led Kaufmann to the conclusion that the book of Hosea was composed by two prophets.[13] The first three chapters of this book were composed, according to him, by a prophet who lived during the reigns of Ahab and his son Yehoram. It is for this reason that the chapters speak of the people worshipping Baal, a practice that was prevalent at that time.

One may, therefore, summarize Kaufmann's position as a rejection of the paradigm of linear progression in many stages. He claims that the central idea of Israelite religion appeared fully developed at the very beginning of Israelite history. Moses, according to him, was the innovator of this revolutionary idea, and it was in Moses' day that the popular revolution occurred and that idolatry was eliminated in Israel. Since the peak of this belief-system occurred at the beginning of Israelite history, it did not develop in later generations, and there was no process of substantial development, but rather a one-time revolution.

3

Which is the case? Did Israelite monotheism develop through a revolution at the dawn of Israelite history as Kaufmann argued, or did it follow a linear progression? I suggest that Kaufmann's claim should be accepted or rejected based on empirical evidence.

According to archaeological evidence, about 300 new villages of modest size were built in the mountains of central Canaan over a period of two hundred years, between 1200 and 1000 BCE. Most archaeologists agree that these settlements were built by the first Israelites or proto-Israelites. In the past hundred years extensive archaeological surveys and digs[14] of these settlements were undertaken, and as several scholars have pointed out, the evidence from this period, Iron I, or the period of the Judges is quite surprising: In all of the Israelite settlements of the Iron I period, in the mountains, almost no anthropomorphic statues or figurines were found.[15]

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12 Kaufmann, *Religion of Israel*, 140–41.

13 Kaufmann, *Religion of Israel*, 368–77.

14 About 10% of these settlements were excavated.

15 See William G. Dever, "Material Remains and the Cult of Ancient Israel," in *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman* (eds. Carol L. Meyers and Michael O'Connor; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 571–87, esp. 574, 583; Ronald S. Hendel, "The Social Origins of the Aniconic Tradition in Early Israel," *CBQ* 50 (1988): 367; Theodore J. Lewis, "Divine Images: Aniconism in Ancient Israel," *JAOS* 118 (1998): 36–53, esp. 42–43.

To the best of my knowledge there are only two possible exceptional cases: (1) An anthropomorphic head of a broken clay figurine which was found in Iron I, Israelite Dan[16]; (2) An anthropomorphic bronze statuette which was found within a metal objects hoard under the floor of an Israelite cult room in the Israelite settlement at Hazor.[17] But even this evidence is inconclusive, since there are scholars who claim that in reality the Hazor bronze figurine should be attributed to an earlier non-Israelite period, namely the Late Bronze period.[18] Thus, Christoph Uehlinger argues that "The Hazor figurine apparently represented no more to his last owner than just its metal value and recycling potential."[19] In a recent discussion, based on further excavations in the site, Doron Ben-Ami argues against the possibility that the bronze figurine and the other metal objects were put as foundation deposits before the establishment of the first Israelite cult room at Area B.[20]

There is also scant evidence of zoomorphic figurines and statues in the Israelite settlement of this period. The main finding is a bull figurine, unearthed by Amihai Mazar in the area of Manasseh.[21] In this case, however, the bull could be seen as the platform upon which the god stands.[22]

One must emphasize that the absence of anthropomorphic icons from Israelite sites in the central mountains in the period of the Judges, or Iron I, is

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16 Avraham Biran, "Tel Dan—Five Years Later," *Biblical Archaeologist* 42 (1980): 168–82, esp. 178–179; Biran, *Biblical Dan* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1994), 142. There are several cases where schematic and non-schematic human faces were engraved on jar-handles; see Israel Finkelstein, *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1988), 286–89. However, such handles engravings are clearly different from independent idols.

17 This figurine which was found in a jug which was deposited under the floor of a cult room in the 11th century Israelite village at Hazor, see Ora Negbi, "The Metal Figurines," in *Hazor III–IV* (ed. Amnon Ben-Tor; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1989), 353–62. On the identity and character of this figurine see Gösta W. Ahlström, "An Israelite God Figurine, Once More," *VT* 25 (1975): 106–9; Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel* (trans. Thomas H. Trapp; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 118.

18 See Dever, "Material Remains," 583 n. 12; Lewis, "Divine Images," 43. On the other hand, the entire Hazor cult room was dated by Ziony Zevit to the 10th century; see *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches* (London: Continuum, 2001), 205. If this dating is accurate, this figurine might not be relevant to our discussion of Iron I praxis.

19 Christoph Uehlinger, "Anthropomorphic Cult Statuary in Iron Age Palestine and the Search for Yahweh's Cult Images," in *The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (ed. Karel van der Toorn; Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 92–155, esp. 104.

20 Doron Ben-Ami, "Early Iron Age Cult Places—New Evidence from Tel Hazor," *Tel Aviv* 33 (2006): 121–33, 127.

21 On the bull see Amihai Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1990), 350–352; Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses*, 118–20.

22 See, Ronald S. Hendel, "Aniconism and Anthropomorphism in Ancient Israel," in *The Image and the Book*, 205–228, esp. 218 and n. 47.

at odds with the archaeological finds from the previous period, the Late Bronze period. Many anthropomorphic figurines and statuettes were found in this area.[23] The above evidence is also at odds with the archaeological findings from other areas in Canaan from Iron I, inhabited by Canaanites and Philistines. In the latter areas, archaeological surveys located many anthropomorphic statues and figurines.[24]

This archaeological evidence corroborates Kaufmann's claim that the monotheistic revolution which banned idols occurred at the beginning of Israelite history and that it is for this reason that we do not find almost any statues or figurines of gods and goddesses in Israelite settlements from the period of the Judges.

It is possible of course that there were some exceptional cases where people represent the figure of Yahweh in statue or figurine. This is explicitly said in the account of Judg 17:3–4 about Micah. According to the end of this story, this statue was taken by the people of the tribe of Dan and was worshiped later in the city of Dan (Judg 18:29–31). It might be significant that the only clear evidence for an anthropomorphic figurine in an Israelite settlement of the Iron I age comes from Dan![25]

The Israelites of that period, according to the archaeological evidence, did not represent God with anthropomorphic statues. If one adopts the terminology suggested by Mettinger,[26] one may say that the Israelite belief of that time was one of programmatic aniconism.

As was argued convincingly by Doron Ben-Ami, the accumulative evidence brings to the conclusion that the dominant and central item of the early Israelite places was a single aniconic *Massebah* stone.[27] It is reasonable to assume that the single aniconic *Massebah* stone was a symbol of the presence of the single God of the early Israelites—Yahweh.

As I mentioned above, the first Israelites built about 300 new villages. Israel Finkelstein noted in a recent monograph that only one of these settlements shows any signs of public construction.[28] The buildings he refers to are the large storehouses for food in Shiloh, which may indicate that Shiloh was an important cultic center, at least regionally. According to Finkelstein, the absence of public buildings in the other settlements is evidence that the Israelite villages of that period were not organized under any political or national structure. One cannot attribute, therefore, the absence of the anthropomorphic idols to any central authority, of which there is no

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23 See Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses*, 272–4: Lewis, "Divine Images," 42.

24 See Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*, 323–26, 357; Keel and Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses*, 120–24.

25 See, Biran, "Tel Dan."

26 Tryggve N. D. *Mettinger*, *No Graven Image*? *Israelite Aniconism in its Ancient Near Eastern Context* (ConBOT 42; Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell International, 1995).

27 Ben-Ami, *Early Iron Age,* 129–132.

28 Israel Finkelstein*, The Forgotten Kingdom: The Archaeology and History of Northern Israel* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 26.

evidence at the time. It seems likely, therefore, that the collective rejection of idolatry in the Israelite villages of that period was achieved prior to the actual settlement of Israelite tribes in the area.

I submit that one may offer additional archaeological corroboration for this claim: The city of Hazor was, as is well known, the largest city in Canaan during the Late Bronze period. According to archaeological evidence Hazor was destroyed and burnt down during the second half of the thirteenth century BCE.[29] I share Amnon Ben-Tor's opinion[30] that the only viable candidate for the destruction of Hazor at that time were the Israelites.

The conquerors of Hazor defaced and seriously mutilated the icons that had been erected in the city. Ben-Tor, who wrote an article summarizing this phenomenon, describes this systematic mutilation of anthropomorphic statues.[31]

As I mentioned above, the destruction of Hazor occurred in the second half of the thirteenth century BCE. As is well known, this is the same period that Pharaoh Merneptah offers the first written evidence of the existence of the Israelites in Canaan. As it is well known, in his victory stela he boasts of his war against the Israelites of that time during his campaign in Canaan, which took place around 1210 BCE. The destruction of Hazor by the Israelites accords, therefore, with the information from Merneptah's monument about their presence at the area at this time.

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[29] See Kenneth A. Kitchen, "An Egyptian Inscribed Fragment from Late Bronze Hazor," *IEJ* 53 (2003): 20–28; Amnon Ben-Tor, "Who Destroyed Canaanite Hazor?" *BAR* 39 (2013): 31.

[30] See Ben-Tor, "Who Destroyed Canaanite Hazor?" 32–33; Ben-Tor, "The Fall of the Canaanite Hazor—The 'Who' and 'When' Questions," in *Mediterranean Peoples in Transition: Thirteenth to Early Tenth Centuries BCE* (eds. Seymour Gitin et al.; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1998), 456–67. Sharon Zukerman has suggested the Hazor was burnt by the poor local population against the ruling classes (Zukerman, "Anatomy of Destruction: Crisis Architecture, Termination Rituals and the Fall of Canaanite Hazor," *Journal of Mediterranean Archeology* 20 [2007]: 1–31). However, as was pointed out by Na'aman and Ben-Tor, there are serious problems in Zukerman's theory. See Ben-Tor, "Who Destroyed," 33; Nadav Na'aman, "Hazor in the Fourteenth-Thirteenth Centuries BCE, in the Light of Historical and Archaeological Research," *Eretz-Israel* 30 (Amnon Ben-Tor Volume; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2011), 333–41, esp. 336–37. Na'aman himself (339–41) relates the conquest to nomadic elements in the area but objects to seeing them as Israelites or proto-Israelites. In my view the similarity of the systematic aniconism represented both by Hazor's conquerors (see below) and by the Israelites in the villages of the Iron I period, supports Ben-Tor's view that the city was conquered by the early Israelites.

[31] See Amnon Ben-Tor, "The Sad Fate of Statues and the Mutilated Statues of Hazor," in *Confronting the Past: Archaeological and Historical Essays on Ancient Israel in Honor of William G. Dever* (eds. Seymour Gitin et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 3–16.

Only a small number of the 300 aforementioned settlements were established prior to 1200 BCE.[32] The conquest and the destruction of Hazor took place, therefore, at the beginning of the Israelite settlement process in Canaan. The systematic mutilation of icons at Hazor is evidence that the Israelites were ideologically against idolatry from the very beginning.[33]

The virtual absence of anthropomorphic figurines and statuettes from Israelite settlements of the Iron I period and the systematic mutilation of icons at Hazor corroborate Kaufmann's claim that the religious revolution rejecting idolatry was adopted by the majority of the early Israelite populace. It is therefore also likely that Kaufmann is justified in his opinion that the historical veracity of the biblical sources that claim that the Israelites were idolatrous during the period of Judges is doubtful. It stands to reason that these statements should be attributed to a redactional layer added to the book during a late period. This layer wanted to depict the period of Judges as negative and anarchic: "In those days there was no king in Israel, and every man did as he wished" (Judg 18:1; 19:1; 21:25).

I accept Theodore Lewis' contention that programmatic aniconism was very rare phenomenon in the ancient Near East.[34] The sole example outside of Israel comes from Egypt in the mid-14th century BCE, under the dominion of Akhenaten. The question about possible impact of Akhenaten on biblical religion is outside of the scope of this study.

4

Though I accept Kaufmann's claims regarding the religious revolution at the dawn of Israelite history and the absence of idolatry during the period of the Judges, I disagree with him regarding the monarchic period.

As Othmar Keel and Ronald Hendel have noted there is an apparent connection between opposition to idols and opposition to the monarchy.[35] Hendel suggests that since in Canaanite religion the king was sometimes depicted as sitting on a throne on top of cherubs, the Israelites left the throne empty. In polytheistic cultures the similar anthropomorphic representation of gods and kings expresses the divinity of the monarchs.

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[32] See Finkelstein, *Archeology,* 315–321, and Avraham Faust, *Israel's Ethnogenesis: Settlement, Interaction, Expansion and Resistance* (London: Equinox, 2006), 159–69.

[33] I think that the Israelites of Iron Age I were a heterogenic group combined of various elements, some of them local, others outsiders. As was noted by Faust, *Israel's Ethnogenesis*, 172–74, most scholars agree that some of the proto-Israelites came from outside of Canaan.

[34] *Lewis,* "Divine Images," 50.

[35] Othmar Keel, *Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst: Eine neue Deutung der Majestätsschilderungen in Jes 6, Ez 1 und 10 und Sach 4* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1977) 39–40; Hendel, "Social Origins," 365–82.

W. W. Hallo and Hendel argued that Israelite aniconism reflects an opposition to monarchy and to the elevation of the king to divine status.[36]

In my opinion, the deeper connection between the opposition to the monarchy and to the negation of iconic representation of the God of Israel derives from the basic idea of biblical religion as presented by Kaufmann. Monarchic ideology in the ancient Near East represented the king as a divine figure, who was sometimes referred to as the "son of God."[37] This ideology is in direct contrast to the central idea of biblical religion, namely the complete disconnection between God and the natural world, and between God and the world of humans. How then could a human monarch be described as a divine being and as the son of God? Does this not fly in the face of the complete disconnect between God and the biological realities of birth and procreation?

In my view, the desire to elevate God above nature and its laws and above human beings led the first Israelites, living in the period of the Judges, to reject the monarchy and monarchic ideology prevalent in most of ancient Near Eastern society with its tendency to elevate kings to divine or semi-divine status. This desire to elevate God and distinguish between what was divine and what was human is also the reason why the Israelites refrained from depicting God in the form of an anthropomorphic icon. Similarly, the first Israelites rejected the popular idea of a family of gods, which was accepted by most ancient Near Eastern societies. It is for this reason that no evidence of worship of a goddess was ever found in the Israelite settlements of Iron I, be it Asherah, Anat, or Ashtoret.

This principled rejection of the monarchy did not, however, exist forever. It is likely that because of the military pressure exerted by the Philistines, the Israelites decided to appoint a monarch who could save them from their enemies. The foundation of the monarchy in Saul's time, at the end of the 11th century BCE, was the beginning of a fundamental shift in Israelite culture. The founding of the monarchy was a "ticket of admission" to the family of nations. Following the foundation of the monarchy the phenomenon of diplomatic marriages with neighboring polities became prevalent. This was common practice in the ancient Near East going back hundreds of years. We read of David's marriage to Maacah the daughter of the King Geshur, Solomon's marriage to Pharaoh's daughter, and Ahab's

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36 William W. Hallo, "Texts, Statues and the Cult of the Divine King," in *Congress Volume: Jerusalem 1986* (ed. John A. Emerton; VTSup 40; Leiden: Brill, 1988), 54–65; Hendel, "Aniconism and Anthropomorphism," 225–28.

37 The basic discussion is by Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948). As was pointed out by Frankfort, there is difference here between the Egyptians who elevated the Pharaohs to complete divine status and the situation in Mesopotamia where the king was described as being created in the divine image but was not perceived as a deity.

marriage to Jezebel the daughter of the king of Sidon.[38] These foreign princesses had a major role in introducing idolatry to Israel and Judea.[39] The establishment of the monarchy in Israel and Judah led to the adoption of almost all the monarchic ideology prevalent in the ancient Near East at the time. Some psalms relate to the king as a divine figure or the son of God.[40]

Just as the foundation of the monarchy led do the inclusion of Judah and Israel among the family of nations as reflected in political marriages and the adoption of the idea that the king has a divine status as God's son, so too were the Israelites influenced by the religious cult of surrounding nations. This is reflected in the findings from the monarchic period, which include many anthropomorphic icons. Usually these icons are of female figures, and scholars are unsure of their exact significance. The connection with the Canaanite Goddess Asherah seems reasonable.[41]

I concurred above with Kaufmann that the statements regarding idolatry in Israel during the period of the Judges are not historical. However, I disagree with Kaufmann regarding his appraisal of the monarchic period, and I argue that the biblical accounts and the prophetic castigation against idolatrous practices during the monarchic period should be taken at face value, as a reflection of historical reality. My disagreement with Kaufmann is based upon archaeological evidence from the monarchic period delineated above. As I argued in my book, *Biblical Beliefs*,[42] the attempts by Kaufmann and subsequently Ginsberg to divide the book of Hosea between two authors is unconvincing.[43] The entire book was written by one prophet who

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38 See Ps 45:10–16, as well.

39 This was already noted by Kaufmann in his book *Gola ve-Nekhar* (2 vols.: Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1929), 265 (Heb.).

40 See Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (2 vols.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), 1:50–60. As was noted by Mowinckel (ibid., 59), the main difference between Israel and the nations in this realm is with regard to the worship of the king as a divine being, which was not adopted by the Israelites.

41 See Raz Kletter, *Judean Pillar-Figurines and the Archaeology of Asherah* (Oxford: Tempus Reparatum, 1996). On the northern types, see, Kletter, *Judean Pillar-Figurines,* 40–48. See also Karel van der Toorn, "Israelite Figurines: A View from the Texts," in *Sacred Time, Sacred Space: Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (ed. Barry M. Gittlen; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 56–61. However, I agree that even in this period there was a taboo against the representation of Yahweh in anthropomorphic image in the Temple. See Nadav Na'aman, "No Anthropomorphic Graven Image," *UF* 31 (1999): 391–415; Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, "A Conversation with My Critics: Cultic Image or Aniconism in the First Temple," in *Essays on Ancient Israel in Its Near Eastern Context: A Tribute to Nadav Na'aman* (eds. Yaira Amit et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 273–96. In a few cases, however, such as at the newly surveyed site at Motza, near Jerusalem, male idols were also discovered.

42 Israel Knohl, *Biblical Beliefs: The Borders of the Biblical Revolution* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2007), 57–61 (Heb.).

43 H. L. Ginsberg, "Studies in Hosea 1–3," in *Yehezkel Kaufmann Jubilee Volume* (ed. Menahem Haran; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1960), 50–69; Ginsberg, "Hosea," *EncJud* 8 (1971): 1010–24.

lived in the eighth century BCE in the Northern Kingdom. The book of Hosea consistently reflects a reality in which Baal worship was not confined only to the days of Ahab and Jezebel but was prevalent many years afterwards.

The worship of Canaanite deities during the monarchic period did not lead to a wholesale abandonment of the worship of Yahweh. Instead a syncretism was created which sought to adopt Yahweh into the family of Canaanite gods. The inscriptions "to Yahweh and his Asherah," which I mentioned above, are evidence of this tendency for syncretism. A similar tendency is reflected in the Judean king Menasseh's placement of the Asherah in the temple in Jerusalem (2 Kings 21:7).

In sum: Archaeological findings are evidence that idolatry was eliminated in ancient Israel prior to the Israelite settlement of Canaan and that this revolutionary ban was in force throughout the entire period of Judges. This revolution, however, did not survive during the monarchy. Understandably, there were leaders and movements which sought to preserve the zealous fire of this revolution, and these leaders and movements often held anti-monarchic views as well. In this context one may point to Elijah and Hosea in the north. A similar northern circle is possibly responsible for the early kernel of the book of Deuteronomy.[44]

5

The conquest of the Northern Israelite kingdom and the subsequent exile of many of its inhabitants by the Assyrians in 720 BCE, followed by the destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylonian exile about 150 years later, marked the end of the monarchic period in Israel.

Most of the Israelite refugees disappeared in the great population transfers engineered by the Assyrians and their memory is lost. Some remnant of monarchic Israelite culture may be found in the Israelite settlement in Yeb (Elephantine). Here, we once again find the religious syncretism which we discussed above. Yahweh was worshipped but the God of Bethel was also revered. Like their monarchic predecessors, the Israelite settlers in Elephantine looked for a female spouse to Yahweh. They probably understood the Canaanite goddess Anat to be Yahweh's consort.[45]

Amid the exiled Judean populace, however, a further revolution took place. The trauma of the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile led to the abandonment of idolatrous practices. The loftiest formulation of these beliefs was articulated by Deutero-Isaiah who lived at this time. This prophet

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[44] On the possible northern roots of Deuteronomy, see Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1991), 44–57.

[45] See John Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 142–44.

sharply castigated idol worship and expressed the monotheistic claims in absolute terms.[46] Deutero-Isaiah also rejected any hopes for a renewal of the Davidic monarchy. This rejection is expressed in Deutero-Isaiah's promise to the entire people to grant them: "David's eternal grace" (Isa 55:3).[47] Indeed Deutero-Isaiah gave the titles "Messiah" and "Shepherd" to the Persian ruler Cyrus (Isa 44:28–45:1).

However, unlike some of the Egyptian writings of this period who gave the Persian rulers divine titles and status, Deutero-Isaiah refrained from doing so.[48] In his eyes no one can be compared to YHWH: "To whom will you compare God and what image shall you accord Him…to whom shall you compare me and to whom am I equal, says the Holy One" (Isa 40:18, 25).

One may therefore claim that when the monarchy and monarchic views died out in Israel during the Persian period, the anti-iconic revolution was revived and refined.[49]

6

At the beginning of this study, I contrasted the idea that Israelite religion developed linearly in many stages with Kaufmann's idea of a sudden popular revolution, which occurred in Moses' time and which led to a complete rejection of idolatry.

As I articulated above, I disagree with both these paradigms. As opposed to Kaufmann, I do not think that a single revolution in Moses' time completely eradicated idolatry, but rather this eradication was a process of many years. In contrast with the idea of progression, I suggest that this process was not linear, but rather a lengthy dialectical process: first a rise in the Judges period, then a decline in the monarchic era, then a new rise and refinement at the time of the Babylonian exile.

Appendix: Onomasticon and Idolatry

Jeffrey Tigay published his monograph You Shall Have No Other Gods in 1986.[50] His major claim is based on the very high percentage of personal

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46 See Smith, *Origins*, 179–94.

47 See Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* (Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 434–37.

48 See Lisbeth S. Fried, "Cyrus the Messiah? The Historical Background to Isaiah 45:1," *HTR* 95 (2002): 373–93.

49 On the possible reflection the revival of the anti-iconic revolution in the material culture of "Yehud" in the Persian period, see the recent discussions in Christian Frevel, Katharine Pyschny, and Izak Cornelius (eds.), *A "Religious Revolution" in Yehûd? The Material Culture of the Persian Period as a Test Case* (OBO 267; Fribourg: Academic Press and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014).

names containing a reference to the name YHWH in the 8th–7th centuries BCE This high percentage is reflected both in the biblical sources about this period and in the archeological findings dated to this time. Hence, Tigay argues that the majority of ancient Israelites in this time were worshipers of YHWH. Tigay's findings and arguments were discussed and elaborated by other scholars.[51]

Tigay's work seems to contradict one of the major claims of my study: while I see the time of the monarchy (1000–600 BCE) as a period of idolatry and decline of monotheism, Tigay claims that at least in the second half of this period, idolatry was marginal in Israel and Judah. However, in my view, Tigay himself supplies the argument against the validity of his findings to our problem. On page 17 of his book he writes the following:

> Onomastic habits change slowly, and the process is not necessarily expedited by religious revolutions, even zealous ones. Christians—both laity and clergy—did not begin to abandon pagan theophoric names earnestly until late in the fourth century. Before that, as A. Harnack put it, "Here was the primitive church exterminating every vestige of polytheism in her midst, tabooing pagan mythology as devilish .[…] and yet freely employing pagan names which had hitherto been in vogue!" "The martyrs perished because they declined to sacrifice to the gods whose names they bore!"[52] It may be assumed that a certain percentage of pagan theophoric names survived in Israel, too, simply out of inertia without their users acknowledging the deities they mention.

Tigay continues and adds the following significant point:

> On the other hand, the high percentage of Yahwistic names does not necessarily point to an equal percentage of monotheists or monolatrists. Even polytheists could give some or all their children Yahwistic names if Yahweh was one of the gods they worshiped. Ahab (and perhaps Jezebel) had sons named Ahaziah and J(eh)horam, and Athaliah may have been his daughter; Athaliah's son was also named Ahaziah (1 Kg. 22:40; 2 Kg. 3:1; 8:18, 26).

In my view Tigay's recognition—that "the high percentage of Yahwistic names does not necessarily point to an equal percentage of monotheists or

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[50] J. H. Tigay, *You Shall Have No Other Gods: Israelite Religion in the Light of Hebrew Inscriptions* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1986), 17.

[51] See especially the recent discussions and elaborations by Seth L. Sanders, "When the Personal Became Political: An Onomastic Perspective on the Rise of Yahwism," *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel* 4 (2015): 59–86, and Alexander Rofé, "Text and Context: The Textual Elimination of the Names of Gods and Its Literary, Administrative, and Legal Context," in *From Author to Copyist: Essays on the Composition, Redaction, and Transmission of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of Zipi Talshir* (ed. Cana Werman; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 63–79.

[52] Adolf von A. Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1961), 422–430.

monolatrists. Even polytheists could give some or all their children Yahwistic names if Yahweh was one of the gods they worshiped"—actually undermines the entire claim of his book. As Tigay righty notes, the major supporters of the Baal worship in the 8th century BCE, Ahab in Israel and Athaliah in Judah, gave their children Yahwistic names. This is great proof that the findings about the very high percentage of personal names containing a reference to the name YHWH in the 8th–7th centuries BCE cannot prove that the people who gave these names to their children did not worship other gods beside YHWH.

The "Song of Deborah" is probably the best example of a literary work from the time of the Judges.[53] As was noted by scholars, YHWH is the only divine name used by the author of the song for the God of Israel.[54] This is evidence for the centrality of this divine name at this period. The continuous centrality of this name in the Israelite population in the following period of the monarchy should be taken as evidence for the conservative character of the onomasticon, which, as was noted by Tigay, can be seen in other cultures.

The archaeological findings of anthropomorphic icons and figurines in the Israelite and Judean settlements in the time of the monarchy together with the inscriptions that mention YHWH and Asherah are more relevant to our issue. These artifacts prove that unlike in the period of the Judges (Iron 1), in the time of the monarchy (Iron 2) many people did not kept the commandment: "You shall have no other gods."

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[53] On the consensus among most scholar about the dating of this song to the period of the Judges see Charles. L. Echols, *"Tell Me, O Muse": The Song of Deborah (Judges 5) in the Light of Heroic Poetry* (New York and London: T&T Clark, 2008), 44–63. I have argued in a recent study that the major part of the song is from the period of the Judges with some later editorial addition. The blaming of Israel in idolatry in Judges 5:8 belongs in my view to the editorial layer; see Israel Knohl, "The Original Version of Deborah's Song and Its Numerical Structure," *Vetus Testamentum* 66 (2016): 45–65.

[54] See Echols, "*Tell Me, O Muse*," 28, and the references to previous scholars in n. 84 there.

The Legacy of Yehezkel Kaufmann's Commentaries to Joshua and Judges

Nili WAZANA

Introduction

Yehezkel Kaufmann's scholarly odyssey was initially stimulated by an historical-sociological question: he set out to explain the riddle of the people of Israel, its unique history and long term existence among the nations. This is reflected in the expanded title of his first book *Gola ve-nekhar*: "Exile and Alien Lands: Socio-Historical Research on the Question of the Fate of the Nation of Israel from Antiquity to the Present," published in Tel Aviv in 1929–1930.[1] His answer to the riddle of Israel's persistence throughout the ages was theological—Israel's unique religious beliefs kept the people of Israel's identity apart from their neighbors.[2] The historical-sociological question led him then to a study of the theology of biblical Israel, which he made public in his monumental four volume work *Toledot ha-emunah ha-yisre'elit* (The Religion of Israel, from Its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile), published in Hebrew between 1937 and 1956.[3] When investigating the foundations of biblical theology, in particular monotheism which he termed אמונת הייחוד, Kaufmann accepted the premises of the historical-critical school that the text was a complex human creation, and

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1 Published by Dvir Publishing House. Original title in Hebrew: גולה ונכר: מחקר היסטורי-סוציולוגי בשאלת גורלו של עם ישראל מימי קדם ועד הזמן הזה. My English translation of the title follows Thomas M. Krapf, "Yehezkel Kaufmann's Attitude to *Wissenschaft des Judentums*," *Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies* 11 (1993): 73. Peter Slyomovics claims that the motivation behind the historical research was Herzlian and secular-nationalistic in viewing practical Zionism as the only solution to the Jewish situation. See his *Yitzhak Julius Guttmann and Yehezkel Kaufmann: The Relationship of Thought and Research* (PhD diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1980), 128–129 (in Hebrew).

2 This inquiry is very much a product of *Zeitgeist* at a time when new socialist and Zionist ideologies swept over intellectual European Jews. For a summary of the main ideas of the book, see Thomas Krapf, *Yehezkel Kaufmann: Ein Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg zur Theologie der Hebräischen Bibel* (Studien zu Kirche und Israel 11; Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum, 1990), 123–133.

3 *Toledot ha-emunah ha-yisre'elit* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute and Tel Aviv: Dvir Publishing House, 1937–1956). Moshe Greenberg published an abridged translation of volumes I–III, entitled *The Religion of Israel by Yehezkel Kaufmann* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960). C. W. Efroymson translated parts of vol. IV under the title, *The Babylonian Captivity and Deutero-Isaiah* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1970).

accordingly rejected the concept of divine origin of the monotheistic belief. Yet he stressed the uniqueness of the Israelite faith reflected in the Bible and was unwilling to view it as a product which developed over time from pagan roots. This monotheistic idea was further grounded by him in what he understood as a unique national phenomenon, embedded in the early stages of the existence of Israel.[4] Monotheism in his opinion sprang *ex nihilo* and intuitively, contemporaneously with the appearance of Israel. It later developed culturally, but the idea of monotheism was a revolution rather than an evolution.[5]

It was his conviction that the idea of monotheism was unique and generated only once that drew him back to historical-political issues. In particular, his theological view that there never was syncretism or even substantial contact between Israelite and Canaanite religions led him to investigate anew the conquest of the land. Kaufmann admitted his purpose in writing the commentaries to the books of Joshua and Judges in a letter to Moshe Greenberg from 12 June, 1960: "I do not plan to comment on all the Former Prophets, but the case of Joshua and Judges is special: these books relate the *beginnings* of the people of Israel, and their testimony is decisive also for the beginnings of the *religion* of Israel" (emphasis in original).[6] Even more definite are Kaufmann's opening words to his commentary on the book of Joshua, presenting the question with which he was struggling, and indicating the answer to be proposed:

> The question of the (historical) trustworthiness of the book of Joshua is of substantial value not only for the study of the actual political history of ancient Israel, but also for the study of the history of the *religion* of Israel.[7] According to prevalent scholarly opinion the tribes of Israel did not enter

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4 Yehezkel Kaufmann, "The Bible and Mythological Polytheism," *JBL* 70 (1951): 179–197, in particular pp. 196–197. For his concept of scripture see Job Y. Jindo, "Concepts of Scripture in Yehezkel Kaufmann," in *Jewish Concepts of Scripture: A Comparative Introduction* (ed. Benjamin D. Sommer; New York: New York University Press, 2012), 230–246.

5 See Peter Slyomovics, "Y. Kaufmann's Critique of J. Wellhausen: A Philosophical-Historical Perspective," *Zion* 49/1 (1984): 61–92, especially p. 79 (in Hebrew).

6 Quoted by Greenberg in his preface to the reissue of Y. Kaufmann, *The Biblical Account of the Conquest of Canaan* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1985), 10. Note that Moshe Greenberg changed the charged word "Palestine," which referred to the geographical entity, from the original 1953 English title to "Canaan" in his 1985 reissue without explanation. The English monograph was translated from a Hebrew manuscript by M. Dagut, and the Hebrew version was published two years later (1955 by Bialik Institute and Dvir) under the title *ha-sippur ha-mikra'i 'al kibush ha-aretz* ("The Biblical Account of the Conquest of the Land"), with no specification of the name of the articulated land. This is in line with the fact that the biblical promissory texts themselves often tend to avoid naming the land, calling it "this land" (see Nili Wazana, *All the Boundaries of the Land* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013], 85–96).

7 The Hebrew original here is *toledot ha-emuna ha-yisre'elit* as the title of his famous work. The word *ha-emuna* is emphasized in the original.

> the land as one people united in a religious monotheistic covenant… Monotheism was first created only in the latter period of prophecy. There was no religious contradiction between the Israelite tribes and Canaanites, and the Canaanites were not proscribed for religious reasons. On the contrary, the tribes settled within the Canaanites, merging with them, accepting their Baal worship. A syncretized religion, Israelite-Canaanite, of YHWH-Baal was created, and until many later generations there was no rejection of this religion. The book of Joshua absolutely contradicts this reconstruction of the beginning of Israel. It speaks of a national conquest of the land, of one monotheistic people led by a prophet, of proscription of the Canaanites for the purpose of purging the land from paganism, of Israelite faithfulness to God all the days of Joshua. If the book of Joshua is reliable, the prevalent scholarly opinion is not true.[8]

Kaufmann's theological reconstruction, evident here, thus motivated him to write three books related to the subject of the conquest of the land in the last decade of his life. Each of them and the three collectively continue to develop the ideas signalled so far.

In 1953 he published a monograph (vii + 98 pages) in English entitled *The Biblical Account of the Conquest of Palestine*, in which he claimed that the book of Joshua was composed "by a recorder of events at the beginning of the period of Judges, at the time of Dan's migration to the north".[9] Although "clothed in legends from the first," it was nonetheless historically reliable in terms of the success of the conquest, preserving "the iron framework of the actual events". His theological point of departure is evident here too, when he claims that the tribes succeeded in overcoming the technical-military superior Canaanite forces which possessed cavalry and chariots, thanks to their unity, which had established itself in "the religio-national covenant of the tribes made between them in the wilderness".[10] Naturally, "the Tribes' greatest advantage lay in the *spirit* with which they were fired, the new *faith* for which they fought".[11] The same faith that underlies the unique history of contemporary Israel was the motivating force responsible for the historical success of the conquest of the land. Besides this monograph Kaufmann returned to the subject in two key commentaries, which are in fact specifically dedicated to prove the validity of his ideological point of departure. In 1959 he published the commentary on

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8 Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Book of Joshua* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sepher, 1959), v (in Hebrew). This and the following quotes from his commentaries to Joshua and Judges are my translations from the original Hebrew.

9 Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Biblical Account of the Conquest of Palestine* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1953). This quote and the next two are from p. 97. The references in this paper relate to the page numbers of the original 1953 edition.

10 Ibid., 91.

11 Ibid., 93, emphasis in original.

Joshua, to which he added in 1962 the commentary on Judges.[12] He had dealt with the entire biblical corpus in his extensive four-volume *History of the Religion of Israel*, yet Joshua and Judges were the only two biblical books to which he dedicated a commentary. Both commentaries enable Kaufmann to develop interpretations which further support his view by validating the historicity of the conquest. When the text does not seem to support Kaufmann's ideological position, the thrust of the interpretation is to iron out the differences. Serving his predetermined conception of the history of Israel's religion, they are therefore not all-encompassing studies, but commentaries in service of an agenda, which he fully acknowledged: "The commentary will focus on discussing the book of Joshua as an historical document and literary creation".[13] In line with his general interest in the history of the period, his concentration on the literary aspects of the books is secondary as well, in service of his theological purpose. The introduction to the Hebrew edition of the monograph *The Biblical Story of the Conquest of the Land* in 1955 opens with an explicit charge against the scientific literary-critical methods. They are responsible for the historical-theological "chaotic" consequences: "The tendency of biblical research to turn the books of the Bible into a chaos of broken pieces and fragments (לתוהו ובוהו של שברים ורסיסים), the tendency to ruin the biblical monuments by insignificant criticism and insipid eisegesis (בקורת של מה-בכך ודרשנות תפלה) had the most severe consequences on the study of the history of the beginning of Israel".[14] Kaufmann does not object to criticism as such and he makes use of it, but he rejects the scholars' application of rules of "Latin composition" on the biblical text if it does not seem "consistent". He opposes the easy use of "scissors and paste" methods in order to "emend" the text and avoid repetitions, contradictions, derangements of sequence etc. supposedly created by second- and third-hand "redactors" and "expanders," "most of whom were complete fools and botchers."[15] Hence, for Kaufmann, both the historical investigations of the period of the conquest and the literary analysis of the compositions depicting it (Joshua and Judges) are harnessed to serve his theological chariot.

Kaufmann's insistence on the total separation of Israelite religion from any Canaanite influence is nowadays refuted by archaeological and textual findings. At the time, the general scholarly world was exposed to his ideas on the theology of Israel only in 1960, when Moshe Greenberg published the abridged translation of Kaufmann's "History of the Religion of Israel". His English booklet, *The Biblical Account of the Conquest of Palestine*

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[12] For the commentary on Joshua see above, n. 8; for Judges: Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Book of Judges* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Kiryat Sepher, 1962).

[13] *Joshua* (above, n. 8), v.

[14] *Biblical* Account, 1 (see above, n. 6).

[15] *Biblical Account*, 2–3. See also John Bright, *Early Israel in Recent History Writing* (Chicago: Allenson, 1956), 57.

published in 1953, was in fact his first publication accessible to the general academic world, and it met severe criticism even when published. He was charged with "making facts fit theories," yet noted also for the "really acute character of his criticism in a number of places. Many of his points are well taken and should not be overlooked."[16] Similarly, Harold H. Rowley recognized that "he makes many shrewd observations on detailed points."[17]

Despite their inherent bias, Kaufmann's commentaries to the books of Joshua and Judges reflect his genius in many aspects. He made some valuable contributions for the interpretation of Joshua and Judges which did not go unnoticed by later commentators. Published in Hebrew, their circulation was restricted, yet their impact on Israeli scholarship was actually substantial. Paradoxically, his lasting contributions are to be found in places other than those related to his rigid theological agenda or his predisposed historical reconstruction. In the following I would like to demonstrate his impact in two cases. The first is his interpretation of inconsistencies in the sequence of the story of the spies, in Joshua chapter 2; the other is his explanation of the differences between the "major" and "minor" judges in the book of Judges. As I hope to show, his most significant impact in this area does not lie in the details of his interpretations to this verse or that, but in his overall exegetical attitude to biblical prose underlying his commentaries.

As noted by Moshe Greenberg in his 1985 introduction to the renewed printing of *The Biblical Account of the Conquest of Palestine*, "Kaufmann's distaste for speculation on the tradition-history of the literature in question put him outside of the circle of western discussants."[18] It will be here further argued that Kaufmann utilized a literary approach before it became popular, preferring to regard biblical stories as a unity, "working with complexes of material as a whole."[19] When confronted with contradictions, repetitions, and inconsistencies, he related to them as literary devices rather than as witnesses to an editorial process. Thus, in his introduction to the commentary of Joshua chapter 2 Kaufmann says: "The story is uniform and built well, if in the elliptical style of biblical prose requiring from the reader (or the hearer) to complete what has not been said".[20] In his introduction to

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16 Quoted from the book review of Cuthbert A. Simpson, *JTS* N.S. 6 (1955): 258. This criticism was ignored by Greenberg who noted three other reviews (Harold H. Rowley, *BO* 11 [1954]: 227–228; G. Ernest Wright, *JBL* 75 [1956]: 154–155; and John Bright [above, n. 15], pp. 56–78) claiming that "Western scholars received Kaufmann's monograph with respect but demurred at his conclusions" (Greenberg in the preface to the reissue [see above, n. 6], p. 11). When relating to criticism of Kaufmann's polemic style, Greenberg (in the preface, ibid., 12) mentioned also John L. McKenzie, *CBQ* 17 (1955): 95–97.

17 Rowley (above, n. 16), 228.

18 Greenberg (above, n. 6), 11, in the preface.

19 Quoted from the review of Wright (above, n. 16), 155.

20 *Joshua* (above, n. 8), 94.

the book in general Kaufmann defined the literary phenomenon which he termed "the elliptical character of the biblical narrative" in the following words:

> A special feature of the biblical story is its *elliptical character*. Some motifs appear first and are dropped later, some missing at first, to appear later. The story's parts complement each other, and the author relies on the imagination and sense of the hearer or reader. That is why the biblical story entails "surprises". It creates an appearance of a complicated and complex story.[21]

He rejected the common critical solution to logical inconsistencies apparent in the chapter, which involved dividing the story to sub-units and editorial additions "piled together carelessly and inattentively".[22] Complications and inconsistencies are but appearances, "surprises" to be explained by the exegetical reasoning of the reader. It is this interpretive approach, rather than his all-encompassing ideological approach to the books of Joshua and Judges, which I believe had a long-lasting impact on research and is here to stay.

1. The story of the spies in Jericho (Joshua chapter 2)

This story presents difficulties in the narrative sequence, "surprises" in Kaufmann's language. I shall focus on two such inconsistencies.

1.1. Rahab's meeting with the king's men

The first case is verses 1–8, which depict the beginning of the mission of the spies; in particular Rahab's meeting with the king's messengers. The text seems like a straightforward story, revealing the events in their chronological sequence. First the spies come to the house of Rahab and lie there (verse 1). The king of Jericho is informed of their mission. The Hebrew uses here the *niphal* form וַיֵּאָמַר, but the story does not reveal how he received this information or from whom. He then sends messengers to Rahab (verse 2). The messengers order Rahab in verse 3: הוציאי האנשים הבאים אליך אשר באו לביתך, literally "bring out[23] the men who came to you, and/or to your house". Then the story describes how the woman "took" ותקח the two men and "hid them" (using the singular ותצפנו, whether this is a scribal mistake for the plural, ותצפנם, or should be understood as "she hid each one of them"; verse 4a). After noting her hiding the men the story resumes Rahab's conversation with the messengers. She tells them that the people had

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21 Ibid., 74, emphasis in original.

22 "...וגבוב דברים ברשלנות ובחוסר מחשבה": ibid., 94.

23 Translated "produce" by NJPS, and "surrender" by Robert B. Boling, *Joshua* (AB; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982).

already left as the gate, most probably the city's gate, was closing, suggesting they should chase them (4b–5). The story next returns to her act of hiding them in verse 6. It then goes back to reporting how the king's men leave town in pursuit of the allegedly runaway spies in the direction of the Jordan, closing the gate after them (7), and then takes up again the scene at Rahab's house, detailing the meeting of the spies and Rahab on the roof (8).

Within these eight verses there are two notes regarding Rahab's hiding the spies. The first comes in verse 4a, between the king's messengers' demand of her to surrender them and her answer to them, cleverly sending them on a wild goose chase. The second comes in verse 6 after her answer, and before the notice of the chase according to her recommendation. Accordingly, the inner logic of the story begs the question: how should we reconstruct the sequence of events? When did Rahab hide the spies in relation to her encounter with the king's men? Was it before they came, during their meeting or after they left? When determining the chain of events we should also find out why the author chose to create this ambiguous picture. Why mention the act of hiding twice in verses 4a and 6, assuming she only hid them once? Kaufmann duly notes that the first mention of the hiding in v. 4a appears redundant in view of v. 6.[24]

A related issue is determining where the encounter took place. If the spies are already in hiding, the king's men could be standing inside her establishment, dangerously close to the men who might have even overheard them. But if the hiding took place during or after her discussion with the king's men, the spies were ignorant of the looming danger; they were not in hiding, and Rahab and the messengers must have been standing outside her house. The reconstruction of the time and place of Rahab's dialogue with the king's men is intertwined with the issue of the involvement of Rahab, the only character granted a name in the story besides Joshua: if she had hidden them in advance, how did she know they were in danger? Was she perhaps guilty of manipulating the entire chain of events, maybe even the one to notify the king of their existence? No doubt, if we were to write a script based on the story, all those questions need to be answered. Yet the elliptical nature of biblical prose as Kaufmann rightly noted, leaves many possibilities open.

One way to solve the issue is to remove the first "redundant" notice of the hiding in verse 4a, which interrupts her talk with the messengers.[25] However, there is no textual basis for this deletion or evidence that it was a later insertion. In order to explain this interfering note, scholars suggest that

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[24] *Joshua* (above, n. 8), 94, in his introduction to the chapter.

[25] Volkmar Fritz, *Das Buch Josua* (HAT; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 33, wrote: "4a ist ein Nachtrag, der ausdrücklich feststellt, daß Rahab die Männer versteckt hat. Die Bemerkung wurde ungeschickt in das Gespräch eingefügt und ist für den Verlauf der Erzählung überflüssig, da die Tat Rahabs eigentlich darin besteht, daß sie die Männer nicht ausliefert, indem sie ihre Anwesenheit bestreitet."

the sequence must be understood differently than the mere order of mentioned actions. A common solution is that Rahab hid the spies *before* the demand to surrender them. As Rösel states: "The order of the biblical account does not reflect that she must have hidden the men before the messengers arrived and a dialog with them took place".[26] The scene here should then be reconstructed thus, in the words of another commentator: "In vv. 3–5 Rahab converses with the king's delegation, while the spies are in hiding".[27] Both mentions of the act of hiding are accordingly out of sequence; both should be interpreted as pluperfect in meaning.[28] This solution was already suggested by the medieval commentator Radak (Rabbi David Kimhi, 1160–1235). Radak refers also to the place where the dialogue with the king's men took place, placing the encounter explicitly *inside* the house. The timing of the hiding and the place of the conversation are indeed connected: if the king's messengers entered Rahab's house as he assumes, hiding the spies on the roof had to take place before the encounter.[29]

In opposition to Radak, Kaufmann places the scene *outside* Rahab's house. This he says in relation to the demand in verse 3, הוציאי האנשים, which he understands literally "bring out the men," saying: "the messengers are standing outside demanding Rahab to go in and bring the spies out to them" (v. 3).[30] Rahab and the king's men are according to his script standing outside her door. Rahab hears the king's order, learning from the men about the spies' identity and mission. Unlike other commentators, Kaufmann suggests that Rahab hid the men *during* her encounter with the king's men, in his comment to verse 4: "*And the woman took*—not before the messengers arrived (Radak and others). Rahab finds out only now that the people were Israelite spies, and immediately decides to save them. She enters her house as if to surrender them, but she hurries them to the roof and hides them."[31]

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[26] Hartmut N. Rösel, *Joshua* (Historical Commentary on the Old Testament; Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 48.

[27] Richard D. Nelson, *Joshua* (OTL; Westminster: John Knox, 1997), 40.

[28] Boling's (above, n. 23) translation to 2:4 is: "had taken and hidden."

[29] Fritz (above, n. 25, p. 37, n. 4b.5), who deletes verse 4a as a later addition and holds that the conversation took place prior to the hiding, still claims that the king's messengers were inside the house and so has to assume they were in another part of it.

[30] The only commentator who suggested similarly that the scene took place outside and that she hid the men during her encounter is August Dillmann, *Die Bücher Numeri, Deuteronomium und Josua* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1886), 446: "Die Aufforderung geschah von aussen, da das Haus verschlossen war… V. 4. Raḥab versteckt sofort die Männer (V. 6) u. erklärt den Boten des Königs… V. 6. Sie aber *hatte* auf das platte Dach … gebracht." Dilmann, however, is not mentioned in Kaufmann's bibliography to Joshua. Radak is the explicit commentator to whom Kaufmann reacts in regards to where Rahab and the king's messengers are standing and conducting this dialogue.

[31] Kaufmann emphasizes her ignorance also in his comment to the words "and they lay there" in verse 1: "the entire story is based on the assumption that at that time there was no one else there. When the king's messengers came, they had already lain down to

In this case, his reconstruction follows the order related by the story. This however, leads to another question regarding the inner logic of the story: assuming she went in the house *as if* to surrender the men to the messengers, Kaufmann then must explain her words to the messengers upon her return to them, outside: "at dark, when the gate was about to be closed, the men left; and I don't know where the men went" (v. 5). Kaufmann cannot interpret her words as a fake admission that she knew they had already left her house, for that would contradict his explanation that she was ignorant of their mission and had entered her house only after hearing the messengers' demand to surrender the spies pretending to bring them out. He suggests that her words mean: "I did not know they had not come back," a typical example of his supplementing the elliptical text required in the light of the context.[32] The second mention of the hiding in v. 6, "but she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them" is then a repetition. Kaufmann refers to the literary logic of this repetitive mention of the hiding: "in verse 4 the hiding was told in a brief sentence, to emphasize the hurry and suddenness. And here the author completes the details: they really had not left at all, but she had hidden them on the roof." The first mention of the hiding comes therefore in his reconstruction in the right chronological order, but the author had to cut it short for literary effect, reflecting the urgency of the act itself. Once the king's men had left, the story can return to the details of the act: she had hidden them on the roof, among the stalks of flax.

Kaufmann's reconstruction accords well with the word order in verse 6: והיא העלתם הגגה waw + subject + QATAL which often denotes Biblical Hebrew pluperfect,[33] as opposed to the description of the same event in v. 4 by WAYYIQTOL forms ותקח האשה את שני האנשים ותצפנו.[34] The setting of the scene outside of Rahab's house corresponds to the wording of the demand to surrender the spies: הוציאי, literally "bring out of the house." One may also add that his reconstruction brings to mind another famous biblical scene, of the Sodomites standing outside the house of Lot, explicitly before the door which he shuts behind him. The Sodomites demand that Lot bring out the men to them (אַיֵּה הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר-בָּאוּ אֵלֶיךָ הַלָּיְלָה הוֹצִיאֵם אֵלֵינוּ וְנֵדָעָה אֹתָם, Gen 19:5; cf. also Judg 19:22). This seems like an intentional literary allusion.[35]

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sleep. That proves that Rahab did not know who they were and did not hide them until the messengers came" (p. 94).

32 *Joshua* (above, n. 8), p. 95, commentary to v. 5.

33 Compare ורחל לקחה את התרפים "and Rachel had taken the household gods" (Gen 31:34). See Jan Joosten, *The Verbal System of Biblical Hebrew* (Jerusalem Biblical Studies 10; Jerusalem: Simor, 2012), 132–133.

34 I thank Benjamin Sommer for this insight. For Jan Joosten, however, Jos 2:4 is a kind of pluperfect WAYYIQTOL, illustrating retrospection which must be inferred from the context and is not marked syntactically. Accordingly he translates: "but the woman *had taken* the two men *and hidden* them" (emphasis in original, Joosten, ibid., pp. 171–172).

35 For common literary motifs connecting the two stories, as well as the story of the concubine at Gibeah (Judg 19), see Weston Fields, *Sodom and Gomorrah: History and Mo-*

Shmuel Aḥituv in his 1995 Hebrew commentary to Joshua published in the influential series Mikra le-Yisra'el sides with most of Kaufmann's reconstruction but differs on the question of the sequence of events.[36] He is not convinced that the hiding took place during the dialogue with the king's messengers. He also thinks that this leaves the question of the double mention of the hiding unanswered: "It is hard to imagine that Rahab left the king's messengers, letting them wait while she hides the spies, and only then returned to them to tell them that the spies had left her house. And if so, why does the author repeat the act of hiding (v. 6)?"

For this reason Aḥituv does not time the hiding during the encounter, but immediately following it.[37] According to Aḥituv, the second mention of the hiding is indicative of the correct sequence of events, while the first, in verse 4, is ahead of time. Like Kaufmann he too rejects the possibility of her hiding them in advance, for like Kaufmann he too deduces that Rahab did not suspect they were spies until she heard about it from the king's men. Before this discovery they seemed to her "like two innocent bypassers, who came to her house to sleep."[38] She had accordingly no reason to hide them prior to the coming of the king's men. It seems that Aḥituv, like Kaufmann, is reluctant to ascribe to Rahab manipulative motives, which could be attributed to her if she had hidden the men in advance. One may reason that Rahab is not *necessarily* guilty of jeopardizing the mission, thereby guaranteeing her and her family's survival, even were she to hide the spies in advance. Many commentators have indeed tried to clear Rahab of suspicion in that case, as for example Radak, who writes: "she had already taken them and hidden them before the king's messengers entered her home, *when she sensed that the king found out*" (emphasis mine). Marten Woudstra too claims that she had hidden them in advance, saying: "this explains more easily why the king's messengers did not show suspicion. *The woman may have sensed possible danger*, and she took measures accordingly" (emphasis mine).[39] But one wonders in that case how this mysterious intuitive knowledge reached Rahab, and whether this would have cleared her of suspicion in, say, a court of law. Kaufmann's and Aḥituv's emphasis on Rahab's ignorance regarding the visitors' true identity prior to the coming of the king's envoys is in line with her words to the king's men: "I did not know" (verse 4), so her lie to them is based on half-truths, as a good lie should. It also completely vindicates her of any suspicion of ma-

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tif in Biblical Narrative (JSOTSup 231; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), esp. 48–53, 61–64.

36 Shmuel Aḥituv, *Joshua* (Mikra le-Yisra'el; Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1995).

37 *Joshua* (above, n. 36), 82.

38 Ibid., 83, commentary to v. 3.

39 Marten H. Woudstra, *The Book of Joshua* (NIBCOT; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans 1981), 70.

nipulating the situation.[40] Stressing her ignorance leads to a rejection of the possibility that she had hidden them in advance. Why would she hide two innocent passers-by who came to her house to sleep? In that case, she either hid them during the visit (as per Kaufmann) or after they left (Aḥituv).

Aḥituv also refers to the literary relationship between the two mentions of the hiding, in line with Kaufmann's explanation: the second mention (in his view reflecting the correct sequence) is a detailed explication of the act: "What seems like contradiction is the author's way of returning to and detailing matters he mentioned briefly at first."[41] He also refers to where the scene took place, locating it like Kaufmann outside the house but does it when commenting on verse 4 (and not to the words: "bring out" in verse 3): "The exchange of words between Rahab and the king's messengers took place as the spies were in her house; it appears that she stalled the messengers at the door while the spies are hiding inside."[42]

While offering a different sequence of events, Aḥituv's exegetical-literary approach is similar to Kaufmann's regarding seeming contradictions and repetitions. His understanding of the role Rahab plays in the story is also the same. His reconstruction therefore fits Kaufmann's in three points, found in no other commentary:

1. The encounter took place outside her door while the spies were inside the house, ignorant of the danger;
2. There was no prior "sensing" of the danger by Rahab, who was unaware of the true identity of the spies and innocent of manipulation. She first found out about it from the king's messengers;
3. The second mention of the act of hiding is a detailed version of the first, which was a brief account of the act.

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40 A comparison to the story of the Gibeonites in Joshua 9—the only other case of locals in the story of the conquest who avoided the fate of proscription decreed for all the Canaanites—strengthens the possibility that her manipulating the hunt for the spies and their escape was indeed hinted at by the author. According to the conquest story as it now stands before us (Jos 1–12), extorting an oath of protection stronger than the injunction of *ḥerem* through deception (see Jos 9:15, 18–19) is the only way to avoid it. Many scholars attribute shrewd cunning to Rahab who was "running the show" (quoted from F. Scott Spencer, "Those Riotous—Yet Righteous—Foremothers of Jesus," in *Are We Amused? Humor About Women in the Biblical Worlds* [ed. Athalya Brenner; London & New York: T&T Clark International, 2003], 17). See Yair Zakovitch, "Humor and Theology or the Successful Failure of Israelite Intelligence: A Literary-Folkloric Approach to Joshua 2," in *Text and Tradition: The Hebrew Bible and Folklore* (ed. Susan Niditch; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 85–86 (re Rahab informing the king), and 86 n. 4 (re the comparison to the Gibeonites).

41 Joshua (above, n. 36), p. 82.

42 Ibid, 83. His use of the verb "hiding" (מסתתרים) rather than "staying" inside indicates that Aḥituv practically admits that Rahab already hid the spies, whether before the messengers came (Radak and others) or during their visit (Kaufmann).

1.2. The Flight of the Spies

The second sequence problem in the narrative to be discussed here is found in the scene in which Rahab negotiates with the spies as she helps them escape (Jos 2:12–21). In verses 12–13 Rahab bids the spies to swear they will save her and her family asking for a "reliable sign" אות אמת—a *hapax legomenon*—and in v. 14 they comply, promising to show her "true loyalty" חסד ואמת. Nothing is said in regards to the sign. Verse 15 informs us that she let them down the rope from her window, with an added explanation that this was possible because her house was located in the wall. Verse 16 details her orders to them to hide in the mountains for three days. In verses 17–20 the spies renegotiate the terms of their oath, giving her a crimson cord (תקות חוט השני) to tie to that very window. In v. 21 Rahab tersely agrees, the spies leave, and she ties the cord in the window. The dialogue scene is thus here too disrupted by a note referring to Rahab's initiative, in this case her letting them down the rope. Most commentators note the improbability of the negotiations taking place as the spies are dangling outside her window, literally hanging by a thread, in danger of being revealed by the locals. There are also other issues of discrepancies and inconsistencies in this scene. We hear of a "reliable sign" (v. 12), a rope (חבל, v. 15), and a "crimson cord" (vv. 18, 21); the question is what the relationship between them is. The Septuagint version lacks the words "provide me with a reliable sign" in verse 12, but this version may be a secondary harmonizing emendation to the Masoretic text. One solution was to see here a conflation of two versions or even more, one speaking of Rahab asking for a "reliable sign" for signalling the Israelite military forces which house to spare, which is the crimson cord the spies offer her, the other consisting of an escape through the window by a rope and an oath to ensure the commitment of the spies to their rescuer.[43] The disruptive note regarding her letting them down the window then is either part of one of the two versions or a later addition.

True to his literary method, Yehezkel Kaufmann rejects this solution. In his view, the sign Rahab is requesting is not to be deleted nor equated with the cord (as many suggest) "but really the meaning of the words is: in that act of your loyalty (ובמעשה החסד) you will be giving a sign of your loyalty to your servant."[44] The saving act, called חסד ואמת by the spies in v. 14, will be the sign, separate from the cord. The words in verse 15 "she let them down by a rope through the window," seemingly impossible at this stage if this is a unified story, were interpreted already by Radak as a note in ad-

[43] Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, *Die Bücher Josua, Richter, Ruth* (ATD 9; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1953), 21. Fritz (above, n. 25), 35–41 sees three layers here: the original story, Deuteronomistic editing and later additions. Zakovitch (above, n. 40, pp. 92–93) regards verses 17–21 as an addition intended to insert the scarlet cord into the story, and the words "and they departed, and she bound the scarlet cord in her window" (21b), missing in the Septuagint, as "an addition on top of an addition."

[44] Kaufmann, *Joshua* (above, n. 8), 97, commentary to v. 12.

vance relating a later incident ("this happened when she had finished talking to them or after they slept a while"), a solution accepted by many commentators.[45] Kaufmann agrees, and further charges the verb with the notion of intent:

> *She let them down by a rope*—this is not the story of the end of letting the spies down through the window, but a story about what she *intended* (מה שהתכוננה) to do, and in our minds we must complete the preparations (ההכנות) for the letting down which were not detailed. Obviously, the talk in verses 16–21 did not take place *after* the letting down… Such conversation, from the window to the ground, at night, in the city's wall, near the gate, with spies for whom the king is searching is a great folly, and it is not likely that the author was referring to such a conversation.[46]

Kaufmann explains the literary logic of this preliminary note. In his view its appearance at this stage of the story indicates a change of scenery: First Rahab tells the spies her plan to send them away that very night. They stop talking and move down from the roof to the room with the window.[47] Only then she explains how she will let them down that window, and we, together with the spies, learn that her house is situated in the wall. As she is preparing the means of their escape (the rope), she explains to them how they will succeed to get away (v. 16). They continue their negotiations. The actual execution of the escape takes place only in verse 21 where the text notes: she sent them on their way and they left (וַתְּשַׁלְּחֵם וַיֵּלֵכוּ).

Kaufmann offers a similar solution for the note in verse 21b, regarding Rahab's tying the crimson cord after the spies leave, again following Radak who says: "she did not tie it now as they left, but the text tells us that she had fulfilled their order and tied the cord in the window at the time of the conquest of the city" and others who offer similar reconstructions.[48] Kaufmann adds here too the literary motivation to the untimely note:

> *She tied* (the crimson cord to the window)—he (the author) revealed in advance what will happen later (הקדים את המאוחר): when the time came she tied the crimson cord in the window. For obviously such a sign in the window would have aroused suspicion. And the narrator told about it here to

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45 Among others, Hertzberg (above, n. 43), 20.

46 Kaufmann, *Joshua* (above, n. 8), p. 97, commentary to v. 15; emphasis in original.

47 Though he separates between the two parts of the dialogue between Rahab and the spies in terms of their literary source, Fritz too notes the change of site from the roof (v. 6) to the room with the window (v. 15), and wonders whether there was an original explanation to clarify the change of place (above, n. 25, p. 37). He also claims that the flight took place only after the dialogue, and the reason it was mentioned before was to heighten the suspense of the hearer or reader: "wird die Spannung des Hörers oder Lesers erhöht." This is a true sign in his eyes of the artistic ability of the author (ibid., 38).

48 See, for example, Hertzberg (above, n. 43), 20.

> end the whole story of Rahab in Jericho. 6:22–25 relates only what the sons of Israel did to Rahab.[49]

Kaufmann's literary approach is based mainly on the elliptical character of the story, allowing him to supplement required information completing the narrative wherever necessary, in line with the logic of the story as he understood it. He also refers to the flexibility of times and modes indicated in the biblical narrative, when despite the usual chronological sequence of events, a verb can designate an incident that (a) had already occurred, as in the case of the second mention of the hiding of the spies (והיא העלתם הגגה… v. 6); (b) indicate intent, as in the case of their escape by rope—she intended to let them down the rope (ותורדם בחבל v. 15); (c) indicate an event as yet to come, as in the case of Rahab's hanging the crimson cord in the window (ותקשר את תקות השני בחלון v. 21). Kaufmann's use of the phrase את הקדים המאוחר perhaps alludes to the rabbinic measure: "there is no early and late in the Tora."[50]

Those chronological inconsistencies serve various literary purposes, which need to be determined from the context: to complete and supplement the required details as in 2:6; to mark a change of scene as in 2:15; or to conclude the details of a story, even if it is to happen later, as in 2:21. Kaufmann was also sensitive to the verbal flexibility in relation to time and context, which was not always reflected in their form. When referring to the order of the spies to Rahab, "You tie this length of crimson cord to the window through which you let us down" in verse 18 he remarked: "הוֹרַדְתֶּנוּ is by its meaning here *futurum exactum*, which in Hebrew has no special form: the window, through which by then you would have already let us down. The letting down and the tying are both as yet to happen, but the letting down will come first, and once the tying occurs it would have already been past."[51]

Apparently following Kaufmann's literary guidelines, Shmuel Aḥituv reaches similar interpretive solutions in his commentary to the escape scene, as the following points demonstrate:

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[49] Kaufmann, *Joshua* (above, n. 8), 98, commentary to v. 21.

[50] He utilizes similar language in his commentary to verses 23–24: "as at the end of verse 21, here too the narrator revealed in advance what will happen later for a literary reason (הקדים המספר גם כאן את המאוחר מטעם ספרותי): to narrate the entire tale of the spies in one sequence. But the calculation of the days requires that the journey from Shittim began before the spies had returned" (ibid., 98–99).

[51] Ibid., 98.

1. He too declines the deletion of the "reliable sign" in verse 12 or its identification with the crimson cord from verse 18. Like Kaufmann he prefers to view it as indicating the act of saving Rahab and her family, an act of "true loyalty" חסד ואמת as the spies define it in v. 14.[52]
2. He too considers the notice of Rahab's letting the spies down by the rope in verse 15 as a note in advance. The two sets of negotiations should be seen as one continuum, "whose time is before the spies came down the window; the second detailing and adding to the first" השני מפרט ומוסיף על הראשון.[53]
3. He too views the spies' request in verse 18 to tie the cord "in the window through which you have let us down" as a relative past: "future followed by past. When you tie this crimson cord in the window it will be after you have already let us down through it."[54]
4. He too considers the note in verse 21 regarding Rahab's tying the crimson cord as referring to an event yet to happen: "not now… but in the right time" לא עתה... אלא בבוא הזמן.[55]
5. The same phrase, הקדים את המאוחר, with which Kaufmann explained the word ותקשר, "and she tied," in the context of v. 21 and again when referring to the return of the spies to Joshua in verses 23–24, is utilized in Aḥituv's interpretation of the first mention of Rahab's hiding the spies in verse 4a, which, as we have seen, he considered to be a note in advance: and she took the two men and hid him: "he (the author) revealed in advance what will happen later" הקדים את המאוחר.[56]
6. As we have seen, Kaufmann speaks of the verb "she let them down" וַתּוֹרִדֵם in v. 15 as indicating Rahab's intent. Aḥituv attributes a similar notion of future intent in relation to another verb and another seeming discrepancy, which we have not discussed: when the spies come to Jericho, the story reports that "they came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and *they lay* there"—the Hebrew verb is from the root ב"שכ: וישכבו שמה (2:1). Later on, however, after the pursuers have left the house, the story discloses that the spies "had not yet gone to sleep" (v. 8), using the same root: והמה טרם ישכבון.[57] In the context of the first "they lay there" in verse 1 Aḥituv says: "The text reveals that the spies' intention (כוונה) was

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[52] Kaufmann, ibid., 97; Aḥituv, *Joshua* (above, n. 36), 85, commentary to v. 12; see also Aḥituv's assertion in regards to the words "crimson cord" תקות חוט השני: "it is not the rope with which they came down the window," p. 86.

[53] Aḥituv, ibid., 82.

[54] Ibid., 86, commentary to v. 18.

[55] Ibid., 86.

[56] Ibid., 83.

[57] This forms another literal link to the story of Sodom (Gen 19:4). See Fields (above, n. 35), 112–113 for the motif "night spelling danger."

to sleep in her house. But at this stage of the evening they did not yet go to sleep".[58]

Aḥituv follows Kaufmann in rejecting solutions to contextual problems based on division to separate sources or versions, assembled, in his words: "crudely and mechanically" שילוב מיכני גס.[59] Compare to Kaufmann's words about those editors who "piled [words] together carelessly and inattentively" בפרק זה מוצאים המבארים סימני עבוד וגבוב דברים ברשלנות ובחוסר מחשבה.[60] According to his methodological expositions Aḥituv does not base his reconstruction on the elliptical nature of the biblical story, though he too necessarily offers additional information not provided by the text. He refers mostly to the flexibility of the biblical verb system. Concerning "she let them down" in verse 15, Aḥituv remarks: "If the Hebrew had a developed time system like Indo-European languages it could have used 'secondary times' here (such as past of past, English pluperfect). In the absence of such a system those relative times must be inferred from the situations depicted, thus creating the *correct* sequence of events."[61]

Aḥituv does not agree of course with each and every one of Kaufmann's interpretations and completions. But his methodology is similar, and his goal is identical to Kaufmann's. It is to reconstruct the correct sequence of events הרצף הכרונולוגי הנכון, without resorting to dividing the text into separate sources or versions. The means Aḥituv utilizes are also the same even if applied to different cases, and sometimes the phraseology is identical or at least similar. Thus both commentators:

1. reinterpret verbal sequence according to context and not form.
   a. According to both Kaufmann and Aḥituv some verbs note an occurrence ahead of time; both, at times, apply the phrase הקדים את המאוחר to this phenomenon.
   b. They both charge the verbs with notions of intent, כונה; Kaufmann speaks of התכוננות.
   c. Some verbs note an event that had already occurred (cf. Aḥituv's words regarding the sending of the spies in verse 1: "apparently the spies were sent before the order to the people to prepare for the crossing of the Jordan").
2. explain repetitions as a brief note followed by completion and detailing, regardless of the "true" sequence of events on which they can differ: Kaufmann defines it by the term: משלים פרטים;[62] Aḥituv by: השני מפרט ומוסיף על הראשון,[63] or: ואחר כך ישוב לפרטי המעשה.[64]

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58 Aḥituv, *Joshua* (above, n. 36), 83, commentary to v. 1.
59 Ibid., 82.
60 Kaufmann, *Joshua* (above, n. 8), 94.
61 Aḥituv, *Joshua* (above, n. 36), 82; emphasis mine.
62 Kaufmann, *Joshua* (above, n. 8), 95, re v. 6.
63 Aḥituv, *Joshua* (above, n. 36), 82, re vv. 14–20.

More important than the details or even the literal dependence revealed here is the similar literary approach that Aḥituv adopted. Both scholars view exegetical-logical problems as resulting from the gaps between modern literary conventions and biblical ones, specifically the elliptical character of the text stressed by Kaufmann and the ambiguity of the biblical verbal system accentuated by Aḥituv. The answer according to both is not to dissect the text into sources which were carelessly assembled, but to complement the narrative lacunae in the text and reconstruct the true stream of events. In modern scholarship Kaufmann was among the first to suggest this literary method; Aḥituv followed his lead and implemented it in his commentary.

2. Judges

Another case demonstrating the impact of Kaufmann's approach to biblical prose on Israeli scholarship is found in his interpretation of a larger literary issue. In Kaufmann's introduction to the book of Judges he discusses the well-known problem of the so-called "major" judges:[65] Othniel, Ehud, Deborah and Barak, Gideon, Jephtah and Samson. The other category is of the so called "minor" judges. Those are Tola and Yair the Gileadite listed before the story of Jephtah (Judg 10:1–5), and Ibzan, Eilon and Abdon listed after it (12:8–15). For the "minor" judges the text relates schematized details including name, descent, place of origin, number of years in office (with seemingly realistic numbers), site of burial, and in three cases (Yair, Ibzan, and Abdon) additional details regarding sons, daughters, daughters-in-law, grandsons, asses, and affiliated cities in stereotyped numbers. The succinct list of the "minor" judges is thus of a different genre and lacks stories of delivery or accounts of military achievement.

Predictably, critical scholarship explained the differences between the stories of the "major" judges and the notices of the "minor" judges resorting to the literary history of the text, either as reflecting two separate sources, or regarding the list of the "minor" judges as a later addition. Charles F. Burney, in his commentary to the book of Judges in 1918, typically suggests that the notices of the "minor" judges were a late editorial insertion, by someone who wished to raise the number of judges to twelve, representing all twelve tribes of Israel.[66] The "minor" judges were thus literary fictitious figures, personifications of clans or regions, invoked from genealogical lists.

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[64] Ibid., 83, re v. 4: ותקח האשה את שני האנשים ותצפנו.

[65] Kaufmann, *Judges* (above, n. 12), 46–48.

[66] Charles F. Burney, *The Book of Judges with Introduction and Notes* (London: Rivington, 1918), 289–290.

Along different lines, the literary distinction between these two groups was explained as reflecting a real differentiation in the functions of the characters belonging to each group. In particular, Martin Noth has claimed that the "major" judges served as local, sporadic, charismatic military deliverers in tribal setting, while the "minor" judges served an official permanent and consecutive office as legal authorities in Israel's national amphictyony, his notion of Israel's twelve tribe league. In his view the "minors" were the real (meaning judicial) judges in early Israel. Their title was applied to the military heroes when the traditions regarding the two types of leaders were combined.[67] According to Noth, the literary, as well as realistic, linchpin between the two groups was Jephtah, who belonged to both groups, and was thus both a judge in the national sense, as well as a military hero.

Writing a decade after Martin Noth, Kaufmann explicitly dealt with Noth's influential suggestion in the introduction to his commentary to the book of Judges. In particular he rejected Noth's historical reconstruction, differentiating between two functions. This he does in two ways: first, he claims that the concept of a national permanent office of a "judge of Israel" successively held by a chain of "judges" is unacceptable as there is simply no proof for its existence. Furthermore, the "minor" judges appear one after another (זה אחר זה) and not one in the place of the other (זה תחת זה) as do hereditary kings. Then he tries to minimize the differences between the two groups, thus undermining the possibility of their reflecting different historical functions: "Although the list of minor judges is unique, it is not that different from the rest of the material in the book of Judges that we can find in it evidence for a special phenomenon in the period of the judges, evidence of a special kind of 'judges'."[68]

On the one hand the list of "minor" judges hints at their heroic deeds, which were not detailed. The notice at the beginning of the list that "After Abimelech, Tola son of Puah son of Dodo, a man of Issachar, arose to deliver Israel" (Judg 10:1) is according to Kaufmann "a general opening to the entire list," indicating that some or even all of the "minors" were hero-saviors too. He notes further that Yair, following Tola, is referred to by the same verb: he arose, ויקם (10:3). Similarly, some of the traditions of the "major" judges incorporate details parallel to those characterizing the "minors": Abimelech rules three years rather than a schematic number (9:22), and we are informed of Gideon's many sons and his place of burial (Judg 8:30, 32), as well as Samson's grave (16:31).[69] Thus the "minor" judges are in his view somewhat "major"; the "major" are a bit "minor".

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67 Martin Noth, "Das Amt des 'Richters Israels'," in *Festschrift Alfred Bertholet* (ed. W. Baumgartner; Tübingen: Mohr, 1950), 404–417.

68 Kaufmann, *Judges* (above, n. 12), 47.

69 Ibid., 48.

The story of Jephtah, the linchpin, serves him on both accounts. It shows that the literary differences between the two groups are not absolute, and contrary to Noth's opinion, it proves that a national office never existed: "This story is located within the list of the minor judges. Two of them preceded Jephtah. He himself belongs to this category of judges according to the end of his story. But in his days the tribes are every bit divided as in the days of the rest of the major judges. We are forced to say that Jephtah as a hero-deliverer is tribal, yet carries a national office as a judge. However, his story clearly indicates that he never received a national 'office' from any judge."[70]

In this case, however, the literary differences between the two groups were still such that Kaufmann could not comfortably iron them out completely. Because he could not find any apparent literary reason for the differences, Kaufmann acknowledges they must have originated from different sources: "The distinction of this special unit of tradition is correct in its own. But the condition is duly explained by the fact that the book of Judges is made from different collections (ילקוטים) whose authors differed in the way they fashioned the tradition. In contrast, the assumption concerning the nature and function of the minor judges as different from the major ones is hanging on a thread."[71]

Kaufmann, however, was not totally satisfied with his solutions regarding the historical as well as the literary reconstruction. He was not completely convinced that there were absolutely no historical differences between the various judges. In the following, much quoted paragraph from his introduction to the commentary of Judges, after adamantly declaring that there was no real historical difference between the "majors" and the "minors," he still presents the possibility that some of the judges differed in the way they rose to power, becoming judges by virtue not of a delivery act, but due to their fortune and family standing. He also seems not to be happy merely with the notion of different sources underlying the biblical text. In this paragraph he settles for another explanation: the differences between the two groups are owed not so much to diverse sources as to literary choices the author had made when composing the book of Judges:

> It follows from all this that there was no substantive difference between the major and minor judges. Both (אלה ואלה) were deliverers, both (אלה ואלה) were charismatic. Both (לאלה ולאלה) did not hold any "office," and both (אלה ואלה) were sporadic. In the days of both there was no national unity. It may be that not all of the judges were deliverers. There may have been distinguished, wealthy people, of prominent family, who also rose to the position of judges, as is reflected in 10:4; 11:9, 14. We may speculate that the "minor judges" became "minor" and differed from their comrades because

[70] Ibid., 47.
[71] Ibid., 46–47.

> the stories concerning them were deleted. Shamgar was a warrior and a deliverer (3:31), but he also became "minor" because the story about him was truncated to one brief hint. Abimelech was a deliverer (10:1), but there is no story pertaining to his battle with his enemies. The "minor judges" were particularly harmed by the process of abbreviation.[72]

Kaufmann's multiple-choice solution to the question indicates his hesitation regarding the reasons for the apparent differences between the "majors" and the "minors," despite his intense language.

Significantly, all his alternative ideas on the source of the literary divergences resonate in later works of Israeli scholars who dealt with this issue. His initial idea that the differences should be traced back to various literary traditions was picked up by the Israeli historian Abraham Malamat. Writing in 1967, five years after Kaufmann published his commentary to Judges, Malamat too rejects Noth's idea of different functions for "major" vs. "minor" judges, for "The assertion that while the major judges did not achieve national recognition (notwithstanding their acts of deliverance), it was specifically the minor judges who enjoyed pan-Israelite recognition and authority is difficult to accept."[73]

He too suggests that the reason for the apparent differences lies in their presumed literary sources and tries to identify them, building on the unique features of the two distinct groups. In his view, the detailed stories of the heroic "major" judges originated from folk tales, while the succinct lists of the "minor" judges derived from family chronicles, similar to the tribal genealogical lists.

Malamat follows Kaufmann also in attributing heroic deeds to the "minor" judges which were only hinted at, adopting Kaufmann's conclusions and sometimes his words too:

> It is quite possible, on the other hand, that the minor judges also engaged as leaders in actual battle, but no information of their deeds has come down to us. The mention that the first minor judge, Tola son of Puah, "arose to save [*lehōshī'a*] Israel" (Judg 10:1) is not necessarily a late editorial interpolation: it might even be the original heading of the entire list of minor judges… It would thus appear that there was no essential difference between major and minor judges, except from the above mentioned variant manner in which they were portrayed in the Book of Judges. Both (original Hebrew:

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[72] Kaufmann, ibid., 48. The English translation of this paragraph is taken from Yairah Amit, *The Book of Judges: The Art of Editing* (trans. J. Chipman; Biblical Interpretation Series 38, Leiden: Brill, 1999), 84. The sentence "both were deliverers, both were charismatic. Both did not hold any 'office'," is quoted also in Hanoch Reviv, "Leadership in the Period of the Judges" (in Hebrew), *Beer Sheva* 1 (1973): 216.

[73] Abraham Malamat, "The Period of the Judges," in *The World History of the Jewish People*, Vol. 3: *Judges* (ed. Benjamin Mazar; Givatayim: Jewish History Publications Ltd. and Rutgers University Press, 1971), 130. The Hebrew original was published in 1967.

אלה ואלה) types represented the sort of political regime prevailing prior to the monarchy.[74]

Kaufmann hesitantly admits that the members of the two groups may have originated from different historical backgrounds in the following brief sentence: "It may be that not all of the judges were deliverers. There may have been distinguished, wealthy people, of prominent family, who also rose to the position of judges, as is reflected in 10:4; 11:9, 14".[75] This admission was picked up by another Israeli historian, Hanoch Reviv. In an article published in 1973, "Leadership in the Period of the Judges," he developed the notion that the differences between the "majors" and the "minors" related to their base of power. The "major" judges, he suggested, rose to power in the military track, while the "minors" took the money and power track. The "minors" were men of fortune and family eminence, in connection to, if not part of, the longstanding establishment of "the elders". Though they were not military heroes, the "minor" judges may have sustained a military force, which explains how the minor Tola "arose to deliver Israel" (10:1).[76] In his view the similarities between the "majors" and the "minors" relate to their local rule and territorial authority and to the nature of their military and economic sway. Their realistic background as local tribal leaders is the reason why the author of the book of Judges joined the two types together in his book.[77]

A third Israeli scholar who dealt extensively with the book of Judges, Yaira Amit, picked up on Kaufmann's central suggestion in the issue of "major" vs. "minor" judges. Unlike Kaufmann, Amit does not attach any historical importance to the notes of the "minor" judges, regarding them as rhetorical literary devices. But she notes his emphasis on the role of the editor rather than the sources in producing the final result: "Kaufmann… does not restrict the act of editing to the organization of available materials, but sees it as allowing for the possibility of shortening and expanding, even if he does not explain the reasons for this expansion or contraction."[78] Amit, utilizing an all-encompassing literary approach, prefers to put the entire historical question aside, concentrating on the possible explanation

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74 Malamat, ibid., 131–132.

75 Kaufmann, *Judges* (above, n. 12), 48.

76 Reviv (above, n. 72), 215–219. Reviv presents his view as completely opposed to Kaufmann's yet as the quote shows Kaufmann already presented the idea in its nascent form.

77 Reviv, ibid., 218.

78 Amit (above, n. 72), 84–85. The Hebrew original was published in 1992, by Bialik Institute. Kaufmann utilized a similar solution in another case of literary differences. He suggested that the descriptions of the tribal portions of Ephraim and Manasseh in the book of Joshua originally incorporated detailed lists of cities like that of Judah, which were later removed by a Judean editor (Kaufmann, *Biblical Account* [above, n. 6], 34–36). The motive for the omission he suggests was "neither political nor religious, but, if one may say so, publisher-scribe's convenience" (ibid., 36).

for the editor's motives in expanding or contracting the image of the judge. The motive she proposes is: "A rhetorical tactic, serving the editor's plan to build within the reader, in a gradual and controlled manner, an openness and understanding towards the emergence of the monarchy."[79]

In her opinion, with the list of "minor" judges, the editor deliberately avoided the cyclical formulas of periods of enslavement and peace so as to create a rhetorical effect of continuity.[80] The continuous rule of "the consecutive judges" as she terms the "minors" is inferred also from the linking phrases, "after him…there arose/judged." Even the fact that the list is divided, two consecutive judges appearing before Jephtah, three after him, plays a part in this scheme: "The presentation of the phenomenon only once (10:1–5) could have been interpreted as chance, while the incorporation of the second expanded list (12:8–15) suggests a tendency to bring out the advantage of consecutive rule."[81]

By choosing to focus on consecutive rule the author is inviting the reader to make a connection between periods of governance and quiet in opposition to periods of lack of leadership and sin, leading eventually to the establishment of monarchy.[82]

Kaufmann's analysis of the differences between the "major" and "minor" judges can thus be seen as planting the seeds from which three different interpretations grew. Malamat stressed the notion of the different sources from which the author drew his material; Reviv developed the idea that the literary variances reflect the historical routes through which the figures rose to power; and Amit related to Kaufmann's suggestion that the differences originated in editorial choices, supplying a possible explanation to the author's rhetorical goals.

Some of the solutions Kaufmann had offered were also developed, independently, by non-Israeli scholars a decade or two later, in articles by Hauser (1975) and Mullen (1982), apparently without direct contact with his commentary.[83] It seems that Kaufmann's literary approach was ahead of its time, a sign of a true genius.

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79 Amit (above, n. 72), 85.

80 Ibid., 81.

81 Ibid., 85.

82 Ibid., 81–85.

83 Alan J. Hauser, "The 'Minor Judges'—A Re-Evaluation," *JBL* 94 (1975): 190–200 also criticizes Noth's theory, emphasizing like Kaufmann that the note that the minors came one *after* the other does not indicate an immediate succession (ibid., 194). He too believes that there was no essential difference in the roles played by the "minors" and "majors" based on the opening note for Tola "arose to deliver" (10:1) which indicates an act of deliverance like that of the "majors" (199). A similar attitude is offered also by E. Theodore Mullen, Jr., "The 'Minor Judges': Some Literary and Historical Considerations," *CBQ* 44 (1982): 201, who explains the literary difference as reinforcing theological purposes of the Deuteronomistic historian.

Conclusions

The commentaries to the books of Joshua and Judges have never been translated, and their impact remained within Israeli circles. In his commentaries Kaufmann set out to achieve a theological goal by a literary analysis of the narratives relating to the early days of Israel in its land. Kaufmann sought proof in the books of Joshua and Judges for the historical separation between Israel and Canaan in order to reinforce his theological conviction of Israel's unique monotheistic belief. In the long run this idea was totally rejected, both the theological notion of complete separation as well as the historical reconstruction of the period of the settlement. However, his literary approach to the texts, innovative at the time, was influential.

In this literary method there is consistent continuity between the commentaries and *Toledot*. Kaufmann is ready to accept theories of multiple sources and authorships as well as of later additions to the text when he thinks the evidence warrants it. At the same time he curtails the use of source-criticism as a wholesale solution to all exegetical problems. Where other scholars see, for example, multiple layers in First Isaiah and Micah, Kaufmann, in contrast, regards almost all of Isa 1–33 as the product of a single eighth-century author, and most of Micah as the product of another eighth-century author.[84] Similarly, he regards Isaiah 40–66 and 34–35 as the product of one author, rejecting the idea of Trito-Isaiah or of multiple editorial and supplemental layers in these chapters.[85]

In retrospect, the long-lasting outcomes of his search for a theological "kingdom" via an historical investigation are valuable literary "donkeys." In this paper I tried to shed some light on his so-far unacknowledged contribution to the literary method, and thus to place his commentaries, written in Hebrew more than fifty years ago, in the context of biblical scholarship.

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[84] For First Isaiah see *Toledot* (above, n. 3), 3:150–173; for Micah see ibid, 3:265–279, in particular his perception that the book contains a collection לקט of prophecies which were prophesized by one prophet in various, distant times (3:274).

[85] I thank Benjamin Sommer for pointing out this continuity in approach between *Toledot* and the commentaries. For survey of Kaufmann's treatment of Second Isaiah see Benjamin D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40–66* (Contraversions: Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 188–190.

Yehezkel Kaufmann and Recent Scholarship:

Toward a Richer Discourse of Monotheism[1]

Benjamin D. SOMMER

While the influence of Yehezkel Kaufmann on Jewish biblical scholars has been immense, his work has rarely been studied outside Jewish circles. There have been some exceptions to this trend; one thinks, for example, of William Foxwell Albright, Morton Smith, and Mark Smith. These scholars, however, are atypical among their American colleagues in citing Kaufmann's work.[2] Among Europeans, Kaufmann's work seems to be all but completely unknown. And yet some important European scholars have presented theses resembling central elements of his work. It is abundantly clear that the scholars in question have no knowledge of Kaufmann's work, and for this reason the fact that their own reasoning and evaluation of evidence has led them independently to comparable conclusions is significant. The congruence between their work and Kaufmann's shows that European scholarship is not as removed from Kaufmann's views as one might assume. Further, the reasoning used by these scholars provides both additional support for his theses and, we shall see, a degree of nuance that renders Kaufmann's approach less brittle and more convincing. I would like to review the ways that several major scholars have articulated theses or perspectives similar to those found in *Toledot ha-emunah ha-yisre'elit* (henceforth *Toledot*).[3] The theses I shall discuss are concerned with the dating and nature of Israelite monotheism. In what follows I discuss several European

[1] I am indebted to participants at the conference on Yehezkel Kaufmann co-organized by the Universities of Bern and Freiburg, as well as to members of the Biblical Colloquium, who commented on earlier versions of this paper. Detailed comments by Job Jindo greatly enhanced the conceptual clarity of this essay. It is a pleasure to thank him for his careful reading.

[2] Indeed, one can question the extent to which any of these three scholars can be considered outsiders to Jewish scholarship. Morton Smith, for example, was one of the first recipients of a doctoral degree from the Hebrew University. Professor Shalom Paul read Kaufmann's work aloud to Albright in the late 1960s, when Albright's eyesight had deteriorated to the point that he could not read. When Paul asked Albright whether he should translate into English as he went, Albright responded, "Mr. Paul, need I remind you that I taught a course at the Hebrew University, in Hebrew, before you were born?" (Paul, personal communication).

[3] Yehezkel Kaufmann, *Toledot ha-emunah ha-yisre'elit* (in Hebrew; 4 vols.; Jerusalem: Bialik and Tel Aviv: Devir, 1937–56).

scholars of the Bible and the ancient Near East; I also consider one anthropologist of religion trained in Britain who worked on African religion.

1. Kaufmann's Approach to Monotheism

It will be useful to review some crucial elements of Kaufmann's thesis regarding Israelite monotheism. I will begin by examining his definition of monotheism, and then I will move on to his dating of monotheism and his view of its origin.

1.1. Defining Monotheism

For Kaufmann, as for the neo-Kantian Jewish philosopher Hermann Cohen in his *Religion of Reason Out of the Sources of Judaism*,[4] monotheism is about the nature of divinity, not about the number of divinities; it is a matter of quality, not quantity.[5] For Kaufmann and Cohen, monotheism is above all the belief that there exists a supreme and unique being in the universe whose will is sovereign over all other beings. These other beings may include some who live in heaven and who are in the normal course of events immortal; but a theology remains monotheistic if these other heavenly beings are unalterably subservient to the one supreme being, except insofar as that supreme being voluntarily relinquishes a measure of control by

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4 See the first chapter in Hermann Cohen, *Religion of Reason Out of the Sources of Judaism* (2nd ed.; trans. Simon Kaplan; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 35–49.

5 For a comparison of the two thinkers, see Eliezer Schweid, "Biblical Critic or Philosophical Exegete? The Influence of Hermann Cohen's *The Religion of Reason* on Yehezkel Kaufmann's *History of Israelite Religion*" (in Hebrew), in *Massu'ot. Studies in Qabbalah and Jewish Thought in Memory of Professor Efraim Gottlieb* (eds. Michal Oron and Amos Goldreich; Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1994), 414–28. Its title notwithstanding, Schweid's illuminating essay refers little to influence and focuses on philosophical and ideational similarities and divergences between these two influential Jewish thinkers. The possible influence of Cohen on Kaufmann is a separate issue not relevant to my concerns here. In an essay translated in this volume, Menahem Haran argues that Kaufmann came to the ideas in question independently of Cohen, since the core of Kaufmann's intellectual project is already evident in his earliest published essay, which appeared several years before the publication of *Religion of Reason*. See Menahem Haran, "Judaism and Bible in the Worldview of Yehezkel Kaufmann" (in Hebrew), *Madda'ei Ha-Yahadut* 31 (1991): 76 (= p. 147-163 in this volume); Haran refers at n. 4 to Kaufmann's essay on Aḥad Ha-ʿAm, published in 1914, five years before Cohen's *Religion der Vernunft* first appeared. On the ways the essay adumbrates Kaufmann's later work, see further Thomas Krapf's discussion of the essay (p. 17-19 in this volume). At the same time, it is unlikely that Kaufmann never read Cohen, who was the leading neo-Kantian thinker of his day as well as a significant figure in Jewish philosophy. After all, Kaufmann's doctorate was in philosophy, and his writings always remained philosophical and neo-Kantian, as the essays by Staubli, Jindo, and Zevit in this volume make clear.

granting other beings free will. It is thus appropriate to term the supreme being the one God and the other heavenly beings gods or angels.[6] In this definition, distinguishing between monotheism and polytheism involves not counting divine beings but studying the relations among them. A theology in which no one deity has ultimate power over all aspects of the world is polytheistic (even if that theology knows of only one deity); so too a theology in which people pray to multiple deities due to a belief that multiple deities have their own power to effect change. A theology in which all power ultimately resides in one being is monotheistic—even if that theology countenances prayer to subservient heavenly beings in the hope that they might intercede with the supreme being, or in the belief that the supreme being is too distant to be addressed directly.[7] What is absolutely crucial for monotheism is that this unique God is not subservient to any other force, be it nature or fate.[8] Thus God's transcendence, rather than the exclusive worship of God, is the essence of monotheism for Kaufmann. We may refer to this definition of monotheism as the qualitative definition (as opposed to a quantitative definition). Because this approach sees the core of monotheism in the transcendence of one deity over all other beings, whether earthly or

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6 See, e.g., Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel: From Its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile* (trans. and abridged by Moshe Greenberg; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 60, 63–67; *Toledot*, 1:417–419, 422–33.

7 Thus Kaufmann maintains, "Even the worship of other supernatural beings, which is for the Bible the essence of idolatry, cannot be considered in necessary contradiction to monotheism. The doctrinal aspect of biblical monotheism is that YHWH is God, there is none else... There is room in monotheism for the worship of lower divine beings—with the understanding that they belong to the suite of the One. Thus Christianity knows the worship of saints and intercessors, as does Islam... Not even the worship of 'other gods' can thus in every case be counted automatically as a departure from the fundamental idea" (*Religion of Israel*, 137; cf. *Toledot*, 1:666–667). Thus, as my co-editor Job Jindo stresses to me, insofar as the idea of God's transcendence is not fundamentally compromised, a doctrine of monotheism can go without the idea of the exclusive worship of God. In this respect, Kaufmann's approach is more nuanced than generally assumed. To be sure, Kaufmann points out, the Bible "proceeds to infer a drastic cultic consequence of this doctrine: the prohibition of worshiping any other beings or objects … satyrs, demons, the dead, and idols"—even though "monotheism need not inevitably come to this extreme conclusion" (*Religion of Israel*, 137). It follows that Kaufmann's position reverses what many scholars, without any particularly strong reason, see as the natural order of things: while many other scholars believe that exclusivity of worship monolatry evolved into quantitative monotheism in ancient Israel, Kaufmann believes that a monotheism of transcendence led to monolatry in ancient Israel—though it did not have to do so. That there can be a non-monolatrous monotheism of transcendence is clear, for example, from the cult of the saints in Catholicism, and, in less formalized ways, from recourse to dead ancestors as מליצי ישר (intercessors) in some popular forms of Jewish piety.

8 Kaufmann, *Toledot*, 1:245, 440–48; cf. Kaufmann, *Religion*, ch. 3, esp. 60, 72–74. See also Kaufmann, "The Biblical Age," in *Great Ages and Ideas of the Jewish People* (ed. Leo W. Schwarz; New York: Random House, 1956), 10–14.

heavenly, we may also refer to it as the monotheism of transcendence (rather than a monotheism of enumeration).[9]

Kaufmann argues persuasively that the Bible is monotheistic in the qualitative sense, even as the Bible acknowledges the existence of other gods whom it generally does not deign to mention by name. Although the Bible recognizes other gods' reality, Kaufmann argues, it is not polytheistic, because in a polytheistic system the position of a supreme deity is marked as contingent in ways that Yhwh's supremacy in the Bible is not. Unlike the highest deity in polytheistic systems of Greece or the ancient Near East, Yhwh is not the child of any other deity.[10] Yhwh is never seriously challenged by any member of the divine retinue in the Bible. We never hear of Yhwh ascending to His exalted status in the way that Baal, Zeus, and Marduk do.[11] Further, the Bible presumes a relationship between divinity and powers present in the cosmos entirely different from that found in polytheism. Yhwh's will is never frustrated by forces of nature, by matter, or by other gods. Only in one area can Yhwh be thwarted: by human free will.[12]

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9 I take the term "monotheism of transcendence" from Adrian Schenker, "Le monothéisme israélite: un dieu qui transcende le monde et les dieux," *Bib* 78 (1997): 448. I discuss Schenker's work in greater detail below.

10 Kaufmann, *Toledot*, 1:245, 419–22; cf. Kaufmann, *Religion*, 60–63.

11 The single biblical exception may be Psalm 82, if one follows the reading suggested by scholars including Mark Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel's Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 155–57. According to this reading, which is based on the sound judgment that the word אלהים in verse 1 stands in place of the tetragrammaton (since the tetragrammaton has usually been replaced with אלהים in Psalms 42–83), Yhwh is not the same person as El in this poem. In this case, Psalm 82 describes the rise of the young god Yhwh to supremacy in the council of the older deity El, who is effectively given the role of god emeritus. Ronnie Goldstein, "A New Look at Deuteronomy 32:8–9 and 43 in the Light of Akkadian Sources" (in Hebrew), *Tarb* 79 (2011): 5–21, provides a reading of Deut 32:8–9 (or rather of a more ancient Israelite hymn to the young deity Yhwh that has been re-used by the author of Deuteronomy 32) that resembles Smith's reading of Psalm 82; see also Smith's own discussion of these verses in *Origins*, 143, 156–57. On the other hand, if Yhwh/*Elohim* in this text is the same individual as El (or if the term עדת אל is simply a frozen expression meaning the divine council, as argued by E. Theodore Mullen, *The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature* [HSM; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980], 230), then another reading is possible, according to which Psalm 82 depicts not Yhwh's ascent to power but the moment in which the human believer comes to understand Yhwh's universal dominion. For a sensitive presentation of this reading, see Matitiahu Tsevat, "God and the Gods in Assembly," in *The Meaning of the Book of Job and Other Biblical Studies* (New York: Ktav, 1980), 155–76, and see the brief presentation of this reading Jon Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry Into the Jewish Bible* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987), 61–62. Against the sort of reading represented by Smith, see further the remarks of Schenker, "Monothéisme," 443.

12 Kaufmann, *Toledot*, 247; see further Kaufmann, *Religion*, 65, 74–77, 292–95, 328–29. Cf. Erich Zenger, "Das jahwistische Werk—ein Wegbereiter des jahwistischen Monotheismus?" in *Gott, der Einzige: zur Entstehung des Monotheismus in Israel* (ed. Ernst Haag; Freiburg i. Br.: Herder, 1985), 41–42, who points out that in J "Yhwh's 'opponents' are not gods but humans or socio-political institutions. J identifies the root of all

This exception results from Yhwh's own decision to create beings who have the ability to choose for good and for ill. Yhwh's single limitation in the Hebrew Bible is self-imposed, but the limitations on the gods in polytheistic texts are often the result of forces beyond themselves.

To be sure, several texts do famously describe a conflict between Yhwh on the one hand and the Sea and his helpers on the other: the most famous examples include Isa 27:1, 51:9–11; Hab 3:8–9; Pss 74:13–15, 89:6–14; and Job 26:5–13. As many scholars have noted, these passages use terms that also appear in the Ugaritic myth in which Baal defeats Yam or Sea.[13] The biblical texts differ from their Ugaritic parallels, however, in crucial respects. They describe a doomed revolt against a deity who was already in charge, a revolt Yhwh puts down without any difficulty. These passages lack any real drama, for they convey no sense that Yhwh was required to engage in real exertion to suppress the insurrection. Baal and Marduk, Zeus and Kronos toil in order to attain an exalted status; Yhwh had that status to begin with and retains it with ease.[14] Further, several of these biblical texts downgrade the status of Sea from deity to object. The word *yam* can be a personal name, as it is in Ugaritic, where it refers to the god Yam (Sea); but it can also be a noun, simply meaning "the sea." By prefacing the definite article to this word, Ps 89:10 and Job 26:12 make clear that *yam* refers to an object, not to a person, since the definite article does not attach to personal names in Hebrew. The texts describing Yhwh's conflict with the S/sea in Isaiah, Habakkuk, Psalms, and Job remind us of the older myth in order to make clear to us precisely what story is *not* being told: to wit, a genuine theomachy.[15]

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evil in Genesis 1–11 as humanity's striving to draw itself away from its dependence on Yhwh as the *primum agens*." Zenger also points out (p. 40) that already in J (as in Deutero-Isaiah, we might add) the sources of evil and chaos are traced back to Yhwh, a circumstance that shows what I would term the monotheistic nature of this source.

13 The bibliography is of epic, if not quite mythological, proportions. See especially John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985), as well as Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 112–44 (and, on the relationship between Baal and Yhwh more generally, 145–94). A helpful review of the main primary texts is provided by Samuel E. Loewenstamm, *The Evolution of the Exodus Tradition* (trans. Baruch Schwartz; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1992), 240–57.

14 Cf. Kaufmann, *Toledot*, 1:423; cf. Kaufmann, *Religion*, 62–63. It is possible that in some lost Israelite texts a story with a genuine struggle was once told (see Umberto [Moshe David] Cassuto, "The Israelite Epic," in *Biblical and Oriental Studies* [Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1973], 1:69–109, esp. 80–97), but what concerns me here is the biblical portrayal of Yhwh, not speculation about texts that may once have existed and disappeared. The single biblical exception may be Psalm 82, on which see n. 11 above.

15 Similarly, one might object to my argument here by noting that Yhwh fights against other gods in the Exodus story. Indeed, the biblical narrators specifically present the Exodus events as a battle between Israel's deity and the gods of the Egyptians (Exod 12:12, 18:11, Numb 33:4). But the motif of struggle so prominent in the Mesopotamian and

Thus it is difficult to imagine Yhwh, confronted by any other being, smiting his thigh and biting his lip, like Anshar in *Enuma Elish* when he hears of Tiamat's war plans.[16] Yhwh never feels threatened by His underlings' revolt to the point bursting out in tears, like Enlil in *Atraḫasis*.[17] Nor can one imagine Yhwh being intimidated into agreeing to another being's demand by threat of violence against Yhwh,[18] in contrast to El in the Baal texts.[19] In spite of the similar language which describes Yhwh's council and various pagan pantheons, their resemblance hardly shows that their respective theologies are identical. On the contrary, those similarities and the comparisons they foster help us to realize that in almost no biblical texts is there any sense that Yhwh's authority, like Tiamat's or Enlil's, El's or Baal's, is contingent.[20]

Ugaritic texts is absent in the Exodus story. The biblical narrative shows that Yhwh had no need to break a sweat in defeating the Egyptian gods. The conflict was drawn out over some ten plagues not because the Egyptian gods were successful in slowing Yhwh down, but because God wanted to prolong the Egyptians' suffering so that His own victory would appear all the more impressive (see Exod 14:4, 17–18).

16 *Enuma Elish* 2:50.

17 *Atraḫasis* 1:167. Rabbinic literature not infrequently portrays God as weeping; see, e.g., b. Berakhot 59a, b. Ḥagigah 5b, Pesiqta deRav Kahana 15.4. Even in these rabbinic texts, however, God weeps not because God feels threated by some greater power or because God has been defeated by one, but because God has punished Israel, for whom God retains (in spite of divine anger) abiding love. On the suffering of God in rabbinic literature, see especially the magnificent collection of sources and discussion in Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Heavenly Torah as Refracted Through the Generations* (ed. and trans. Gordon Tucker; New York: Continuum, 2005), 108–26; see also Meir Eyali, "God's Sharing in the Suffering of the Jewish People" (in Hebrew), in *Studies in Jewish Thought* (eds. Sarah Heller Wilensky and Moshe Idel; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1989), 29–50. On divine weeping specifically in rabbinic literature and its connection with ancient Mesopotamian tropes, see the thorough discussion in Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 160–73. On the limits of monotheistic myth among the rabbis, see further the crucial reservations of Fishbane, 212–13: in the end, creatures remain creatures and God remains in charge.

18 Granted, God can be moved to action by prayer, but this is somewhat different: no threat against Yhwh is made. Even Moses' demand to be relieved of his job and his life if need be (Num 11:20), though a threat, is not a threat directed against the life, safety, or power of Yhwh.

19 See El's capitulation to Yamm in KTU 1.2.i.30–38 (for translations, see Dennis Pardee, "The Baʿlu Myth," in *Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, vol. 1 of *The Context of Scripture: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World* [eds. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger; Leiden and Boston: Brill, 1997], 246b, and Mark Smith, "The Baal Cycle," in *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, ed. Simon Parker [SBLWAW; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997], 100–101), and also El's capitulation to Anat's threat of violence in KTU 1.3.v.19–29 (Pardee in Hallo and Younger, 254b; Smith in Parker, 105).

20 All this is not to deny that some or many Israelites might have imagined Yhwh feeling vulnerable or intimidated as Anshar, Enlil, and El are. There may even be hints of such a view in the Bible here and there. Yhwh does seem to feel threatened by humankind in Gen 11:6 (an obscure verse in any event) and perhaps in Gen 6:1–4 (among the most ob-

scure passages in all scripture). Interestingly, both of these are J verses; on J's tendency to portray Yhwh's act of creation, and hence Yhwh Himself, as flawed, see Israel Knohl, *The Divine Symphony: The Bible's Many Voices* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2003), 37–49. Even these verses, however, do not regard any other force as superior to or mightier than Yhwh. Further, when reading any of narratives that give a sense that some being or force opposes Yhwh, we need to recall that we are in fact reading a narrative—that is, a text with a plot, and hence, by definition, with conflict. If there is to be a monotheistic narrative, it is inevitable that this narrative will give some sense that the one God's power is limited or at least challenged. As Propp has pointed out, "In any culture, we must distinguish between mythology, where gods' powers are limited for plot purposes, and cult, where gods are lauded as virtually omnipotent" (William Propp, "Monotheism and 'Moses': The Problem of Early Israelite Religion," *UF* 31 [1999]: 566 n. 142).

Jon Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988), 8–9, argues against Kaufmann's reading of the passages in which sea creatures fight against Yhwh, pointing out that some of them (in particular Ps 74:12–17) do not make clear that they describe a revolt rather than a genuine theomachy. Nonetheless, the contrast between the biblical passages and the Mesopotamian or Canaanite passages remains striking. Even in verses such as Gen 6:1–4, Gen 11:6, and Ps 74:12–17, God succeeds in thwarting the will of the other beings permanently, which is much more than Tiamat or even Enlil can say. On the divine fight against chaos in biblical and other ancient Near Eastern literature, see esp. the thorough survey and discussions in Othmar Keel and Silvia Schroer, *Creation: Biblical Theologies in the Context of the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 97–106, 147–50, 159–70. This monograph is significant both for its integration of textual and iconographic evidence and for its attention to Egyptian data (and not only to Mesopotamian and Northwest Semitic data typically discussed in treatments of theomachy) in a manner rarely seen outside the work of Keel and his students. Levenson, *Creation*, *passim*, esp. 11–25, further argues that many biblical passages attest to the biblical belief that God did not in fact vanquish chaos at the outset of creation. Each of his arguments demands attention.

(1) Levenson maintains (11–13) that passages like Isa 51:9–11, in which the prophet calls on God's mighty arm to wake up and defeat chaos as it had done of old, show that those adversarial forces "were not annihilated in perpetuity in primordial times" (12). In fact, however, the adversaries in these passages are not primordial, semi-divine monsters but human beings (usually the Babylonians) who have attacked Jerusalem. The existence of the current adversary, then, does not show that the mythic forces of evil still exist; rather, it reflects Yhwh's sovereign decision to give human beings free will and the power to use it for good and for ill. As we shall see below, this represents the primary limitation on Yhwh in the Hebrew Bible, but we must note that it is a self-imposed limitation, and one that Yhwh can easily thwart if Yhwh so chooses.

(2) In Job 40:25–32 God does not crush Leviathan but imprisons him. "The confinement of chaos," Levenson points out (17), "rather than its elimination is the essence of creation, and the survival of ordered reality hangs only upon God's vigilance…" Here again, however, the persistence of chaos results from Yhwh's own decision, not from any limitation on Yhwh's power.

(3) Levenson's disagreement with Kaufmann is smaller than one might initially think. Levenson acknowledges "the inevitability of the defeat of Yhwh's adversaries" so that the faithful Yhwhist must "wait patiently and confidently for his master's reactivation of his infinite power to deliver. The benevolent, world-ordering side of God may be eclipsed for a while, but it can never be uprooted or overthrown" (21). In this case, Levenson's understanding of the biblical picture of God is ultimately the same as Kauf-

In assessing Kaufmann's definition of monotheism and applying it to specific texts, we may find it useful to introduce a conceptual distinction of great import. One can imagine two models of divine kingship: a monotheistic one, in which members of a divine retinue praise the one God and carry out that God's wishes; and a polytheistic one, in which the divine king is first among equals, mightiest to be sure, but in control of the universe neither automatically nor permanently. Conceptually, the difference between a monotheistic council and a pagan pantheon is clear: The divine retinue of the monotheistic God is comparable to the American cabinet, where secretaries of various departments carry out the president's policies and serve at the president's whim. The polytheistic pantheon resembles the British cabinet, where each minister may have an independent power base, and in which all cabinet members, the Prime Minister included, may be dismissed at the whim of lower politicians in Parliament or, at least in theory, at the direction of a higher and more august, if otiose, authority.[21]

On the basis of this distinction, it is clear that the pantheons of Canaan, Greece, and Mesopotamia were polytheistic. Each had a high god, but Baal, Zeus, Marduk, Anu, or Enlil could not be called supreme or all-powerful in the monotheistic sense. Even the high god or goddess could be seriously challenged, and indeed kingship did pass from one god to another, sometimes peacefully (from Enlil and Anu to Marduk, as described in the preface to Ḫammurapi's code),[22] sometimes violently (from Baal to Mot and vice versa in the Ugaritic *Baal Cycle*; from Tiamat to Marduk in *Enumah Elish*; from Kronos to Zeus). Some biblical passages that speak of other heavenly beings (for example, Deut 4:19, many texts from both Isaiahs, Genesis 1), on the other hand, allow only the presidential reading. But it is possible to read other lines or passages according to the "parliamentary" model or according to the "presidential" one. These include Exod 15:11, Deut 32:8–9 and Psalm 82. But the fact that the Hebrew Bible, unlike the literatures of Greece, Canaan, and Mesopotamia, provides not a single example that *must* be read according to the parliamentary model indicates that

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mann's, but Levenson describes the theology in a more nuanced way. We might sum up Kaufmann's view thus: *The biblical God is omnipotent*. We can sum up Levenson's view thus: *The biblical God can choose to be omnipotent. Indeed, the biblical God chose to be omnipotent at creation, and biblical authors are confident that one day God will choose to be omnipotent again. Meanwhile, they acknowledge that we live in a deeply imperfect world.* Levenson's reading of the biblical material is influenced by certain strands of rabbinic and qabbalist thought (concerning which see n. 17 above), and also by the reality of the world we inhabit; it is also a more accurate and subtle description of biblical theology. But ultimately his view of divine omnipotence and Kaufmann's are congruent.

21 In this analogy, Zeus or Marduk is Prime Minister rather than monarch. The British monarch (essentially a powerless though respected figure) would then be comparable to an inactive, older god such as Enlil.

22 Martha Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor* (SBLWAW; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 76.

the presidential model is the norm for the anthology that is the Hebrew Bible.

What, following Kaufmann, I have constructed in the previous paragraph may be regarded as an argument from silence: it is the absence of several crucial elements found in the polytheistic religions of Israel's neighbors that leads me to conclude that the Hebrew Bible exemplifies monotheism. In regard to any one text, such an argument lacks validity. We cannot say definitively that Exod 15:11, or Exod 20:2, or Psalm 96, on its own, is a monotheistic text. But when we examine a wide variety of biblical texts from several different genres (narrative, law, prophecy, prayer), the consistent omission of unambiguously polytheistic themes is indeed revealing. In such a case, an argument from silence is legitimate. The fact that the Hebrew Bible as a whole, in marked contrast to any sampling of texts from elsewhere in the ancient Near East, fails to attest any examples that must be read in a polytheistic fashion justifies the conclusion that the anthology in question is indeed a monotheistic one, and that texts like Psalm 82 or Exod 15:11 are to be taken, in the context of that anthology, as monotheistic.

Before I move on to mention a few additional aspects of Kaufmann's approach to monotheism, permit me to say a word in defense of the definition of monotheism put forward by Hermann Cohen and employed by Kaufmann. The definition of monotheism in the work of these two thinkers is far more sensible than the more common definition, according to which monotheism is a mere matter of counting deities. In that more common definition, once our count has gone beyond the number one, we've entered the realm of polytheism. This quantitative definition is not very useful, for two reasons.

First, according to the quantitative definition, there probably are no examples of actual religions that are monotheistic. If we adopt that definition, it is not only the Hebrew Bible (with its אלים, בני אלים, אלהים, קהל קדושים\סוד קדושים מלאכים), that cannot be termed monotheistic; most forms of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam will have to be classified as polytheistic, too. After all, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all exhibit a belief in angels, beings who reside in heaven and who do not normally die. In the case of Catholic and Orthodox Christianity, we can also note a belief in saints residing in heaven, i.e., humans whose death had no deleterious effect on their continued existence and activity; similar beliefs are attested, albeit in less formalized ways in Islam (especially in its Shiʿite and Sufi forms) and in Judaism. Many Jews, Christians and Muslims believe that prayer can be directed to these beings with realistic hope of the prayer's efficacy.[23] An especially instructive example appears in rabbinic literature: The rabbis regard the worship of the angel Michael as a forbidden form of worship (b. Ḥullin 40a; b. Abodah Zarah 42b; t. Ḥullin 2:6 [= 2:18 in the Zuckermandel edition]). As

[23] As Kaufmann notes in *Toledot*, 1:666–67, and *Religion*, 137.

the Talmudic scholar José Faur has pointed out regarding this passage, the rabbis "considered Michael a benevolent angel who interceded with God on behalf of Israel. His existence was not in dispute, yet worship of him was considered idolatry."[24] The rabbis, who are usually considered to be monotheistic, acknowledged the existence of this heavenly being and were concerned only that Jews should not worship him—not because such worship was pointless, but because it was insulting to Yhwh. It was possible to imagine Michael hearing prayers from the Jews he was responsible to protect; but such prayers were unnecessary, since Yhwh was willing to listen to Israel's prayers Himself, and it was Yhwh who directed Michael's activities in any case. In short, the common definition of monotheism is too narrow: If we use it, then the religion of the Hebrew Bible is not monotheistic; but then neither are Judaism, Christianity, or Islam, with the exception of a few highly philosophical forms of these religions which are historically late and have attracted few adherents.[25] A definition that requires us to classify not only the Hebrew Bible but most forms of Judaism, Christianity and Islam as polytheism fails to capture something essential that distinguishes these religions from classical Greek religion, from most forms of Hinduism, or from Shintoism. A category of polytheism that includes both Hinduism and Judaism, both the worship of the Greek pantheon and the worship of the biblical God, is so large as to be meaningless. The reason that we have categories and definitions is that they make connections and distinctions that are meaningful. The distinction between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam on the one hand and Hinduism, Shintoism, and traditional African religions on the other is real and useful. This remains the case, even though the extent of the distinction should not be overstated, and even though various theological, ritual, and ethical isoglosses also unite, say, some forms of Hinduism and some forms of Judaism.[26] That this definition, like all categorizations and heuristics, has limitations does not mean it should be dispensed with.

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[24] José Faur, "The Biblical Idea of Idolatry," *JQR* 69 (1978): 14–15. On the worship of angels among Jews, see also Jerusalem Talmud Berakhot 9:7 (12a). "Idolatry" here means forbidden worship, not worship of a nonexistent being.

[25] Cf. the astute remark of Propp, "Monotheism," 454–55 n. 42: "For the ancient world, functional definitions of 'monotheism' and 'polytheism' are more useful than philosophical definitions: 'monotheism' is monotheistic behavior. Apparently, apart from the minds of philosophers and mystics, there is no such thing as monotheism; compare William James's obiter dictum, '[polytheism] has always been the real religion of common people, and is so still today' (*The Varieties of Religious Experience* [New York: New American Library, 1958], 396)." Propp's critique of purist definitions of monotheism is quite on target.

[26] On some of the complexities and limitations of the monotheism/polytheism polarity in the study of Hinduism, see Wendy Doniger, *On Hinduism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 10–20.

There is a second reason to prefer the qualitative definition of monotheism over the quantitative one: the former is more consistent than the latter. This becomes clear when we reflect on the implications of each definition. Let us imagine a theology in which there is one supreme being as well as many other beings who have some degree of free will and self-consciousness. These other beings may be mortal or immortal, or they may be both: that is, they may be able to achieve immortality after they die. In this theology, it is clear that the supreme being is not alone in the universe and is not the only being who can have some effect on the universe. The fact that these other beings have free will constitutes a limitation, though a voluntary one, on the supreme being. Now, according to the common or quantitative definition of monotheism, such a theology is to be classified as monotheism if these beings live on earth and are called "human," but it is to be classified as polytheism if some of these beings live in heaven and are called "angels" or "gods." The qualitative definition championed by Cohen and Kaufmann is more consistent: the theology I just described is monotheism, regardless of where these beings happen to live. There is no reason that we should find the existence of subservient beings in heaven any more surprising in monotheism than the existence of subservient beings on earth. Consequently, the definition of monotheism found in the work of Cohen and Kaufmann is far more sensible than the common one. To be a useful category for scholars of religion to think with, monotheism has to be a matter of divinity's quality, not its quantity; to use Cohen's terms: monotheism must be concerned with God's uniqueness, not with God's oneness.[27]

1.2. The Dating and Origin of Monotheism

It is not only in his definition of monotheism that Kaufmann differs from many other biblical scholars; he is distinctive in three additional respects.

First, Kaufmann dates monotheism to the earliest period of Israel's existence as a people—to the time of Moses.[28] In this Kaufmann differs from those who date monotheism to the exile or post-exilic period (for example, those who regard Deutero-Isaiah as the first monotheist). But Kaufmann differs no less from scholars who locate the emergence of monotheism in a Jerusalemite intellectual elite of the eighth century. These scholars regard monotheism as a response to the rise of Assyrian imperialism and its claim that Ashur was the mightiest force in the universe.[29] For Kaufmann, monotheism is much earlier than the eighth century.

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27 Cohen, *Religion*, 35.

28 Kaufmann, *Religion*, 222–31; Kaufmann, "The Biblical Age," 14–29.

29 E.g., Baruch Levine, "Assyrian Ideology and Israelite Monotheism," *Iraq* 67 (2005): 411–27; cf. Othmar Keel, *Die Geschichte Jerusalems und die Entstehung des Monotheismus* (2 vols.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 1276, and Konrad Schmid, "Anfänge politikförmiger Religion: Die Theologisierung politisch-imperialer

Second, Kaufmann regards monotheism as far more widespread in ancient Israel than most scholars claim.[30] He avers that monotheism was not a notion that existed only in the ruminations of a small group of priests in Jerusalem; rather, according to Kaufmann, both the monotheism of transcendence and also the exclusive worship of Yhwh were central features of popular religion. To the extent that the worship of foreign gods did infiltrate Israelite and Judean religious practice, it was largely an idiosyncrasy of the royal elite, rather than the people at large.[31] (In this regard Kaufmann views pre-exilic religion as similar to Jewish religion of the second century BCE, when it was the Jerusalem elite who were most attracted by Hellenism, while rural families, like the Hasmonean family from Modi'in, remained most committed to Israel's distinctive religious and cultural heritage. His view of Israel's culture in both eras also calls to mind those of, say, India or Hong Kong in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when it was precisely the landed and wealthy who were most likely to emulate British culture.) It should be noticed that in regarding both monotheism of transcendence and exclusive worship of Yhwh as widespread in pre-exilic Israel, Kaufmann is decidedly skeptical of the biblical record. He rejects the claims of historiographers like the authors of Judges and Kings and the testimony of the prophets that many or most Israelites were polytheists.[32] Some critics of Kaufmann label him "conservative" in his approach to biblical texts, but in this as in other respects Kaufmann was anything but wed to the perspective of the biblical authors. Kaufmann regards the Bible's claims of rampant polytheistic belief and practice in ancient Israel as inaccurate. He maintains that for polemical reasons, biblical authors exaggerated the extent of worship of other deities or forces. Biblical authors needed to find sins of sufficient magnitude to justify the catastrophes that befell the northern kingdom and, increasingly, the southern king-

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Begriffe in der Religionsgeschichte des antiken Israel als Grundlage autoritärer und toleranter Strukturmomente monotheistischer Religionen," in *Religion—Wirtschaft—Politik. Forschungszugänge zu einem aktuellen transdisziplinären Feld* (ed. A. Liedhegener; Zürich: Pano and Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2011), 161–77.

30 E.g., Kaufmann, *Religion*, 60, 132–33.

31 Kaufmann, *Religion*, 138–42, 273–75; *Toledot*, 1:661–63, 2:221–38, esp. 233–36.

32 Kaufmann writes: "The biblical arraignment is exaggerated; sins of particular groups are ascribed to the entire people" (*Religion*, 135). To be sure, he acknowledges that this exaggeration is based on something: both on the sins of a small minority of the nation who were responsible for royal cults in the ninth through seventh centuries (*Religion*, 139–144) and on a popular worship of objects that was not genuinely polytheistic (because it is unrelated to any specific foreign deity) but was "a magical, fetishistic, non-mythological worship of images" (144), a worship that was fundamentally unfamiliar with the realities of polytheistic worship and the icons that played a role therein: "Worship of 'dumb idols' is, in the biblical view, arrant, sinful foolishness" (146), for the idols, unlike the lower ranking gods, are not real; they have no power, not even the derivative power that, say, Chemosh or Marduk enjoy in the view of biblical monotheism. (Cf. *Toledot*, 1:672–76.)

dom from the eighth century forward, and for this reason they largely invented the trope of the polytheistic pre-exilic Israelite population.[33] But Kaufmann emphasizes that this biblical testimony is historically unreliable.[34]

Finally, Kaufmann's approach to monotheism is distinctive within biblical studies in a third respect: Kaufmann insists that monotheism appeared suddenly and did not unfold slowly from polytheism.[35] (Thus Kaufmann argues that Israelite monotheism arose the same way that Islamic monotheism arose: in a revolution, not as a result of an evolution.) For Kaufmann, monotheism is the product of genius, of the quirky or bizarre insight of some religious thinker or thinkers. Underlying this conception of the origin of monotheism is one of the most important and, from an academic point of view, iconoclastic elements of Kaufmann's approach to humanistic research. He rejects the notion that the emergence of ideas in human culture should always be accounted for in historicist and materialist terms. He opposes reductionism, insisting (if I may paraphrase a saying attributed, prob-

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33 See the useful summary in Kaufmann, *Toledot*, 2:53, as well as 1:659–85.

34 It is important to emphasize that biblical texts largely portray the Israelites as polytheists, because many modern scholars somehow assume that the biblical texts said that Israelites were monotheists. A depressingly large amount of scholarly writing on this subject attempts to debunk the Bible by demonstrating something the Bible repeatedly emphasizes: that Israel before the exile worshiped many gods. A particularly acute example of this tendency is found in William Dever, *Did God Have a Wife? Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2005). To give but one illustration: Dever asks why biblical authors do not discuss the many female figurines found by archaeologists in Israelite sites, which he understands to be images of a goddess. He maintains that their failure to mention these figurines results from their deliberate attempt to suppress any reference to them: "They did not wish to acknowledge the popularity and the powerful influence of these images" (p. 184). In fact, however, biblical authors constantly acknowledge the widespread polytheism of Israelites, and they mention Israelite goddess worship specifically on a number of occasions (e.g., Jer 7:18, 44:17–19). Israelite authors (rather like many later Jewish and contemporary Israeli authors) love talking about how awful their own people are; self-criticism, sometimes of an exaggerated sort, is one of the most prominent hallmarks of biblical (and later Jewish) literature. When Dever attempts to portray the Bible as whitewashing Israelite history, he fails to attend to the fact that biblical authors are in fact obsessed with tarnishing Israelite history. Scholars like Dever who argue that pre-exilic Israelites were polytheists seek not to overturn the biblical picture of Israelite religion but to confirm it. On the other hand, scholars like Kaufmann who minimize the extent of pre-exilic polytheism reject the biblical picture as inaccurate or vastly overstated. Thus Kaufmann reminds us not to take the reports of biblical writers in Kings as reliable: "The historiographer could not account for what had taken place—the collapse of Israel's monarchy—without sin. Israel's sinfulness is essential to biblical theodicy. Hence the biblical denunciations require careful evaluation before they can be utilized as historical records" (*Religion*, 135; cf. *Toledot*, 1:663). On this irony, see David Berger, Religion, "Nationalism, and Historiography: Yehezkel Kaufmann's Account of Jesus and Early Christianity," in *Persecution, Polemic, and Dialogue: Essays in Jewish-Christian Relations* (Brighton, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2010), 301 n. 24.

35 See Kaufmann, *Religion*, 229–31; *Toledot* 2:54–57.

ably apocryphally, to a Jewish intellectual a generation older than Kaufmann) that sometimes an idea is only an idea. Kaufmann avers that in some cases—perhaps, the most significant cases—an idea is not a cipher for or manifestation of economic, political, social, or psychological forces. There are some intellectually and spiritually creative forces within the capacity of human beings that cannot be explained or reduced as epiphenomena of historical events.[36] Here Kaufmann's connection to Hermann Cohen re-emerges, for the neo-Kantian philosopher was an avowedly anti-historicist, and in many ways anti-Hegelian, thinker.[37] But Kaufmann achieves a synthesis that Cohen does not even attempt: Kaufmann is an empirical, philological, and historical scholar, but he does not accept the radical—not to say, nihilist—form of historicism so common among empirical, philological, and historical scholars in the academy, the shallow but common form of historicism that insists all ideas can traced back to material, political, or economic causes.[38] Kaufmann contests this type of historicism, which devolves into cynicism, a historicism that regards all religion, literature, or art as masking psychological, political, or economic drives. It is those drives, this historicism *cum* cynicism alleges, that account for what humans, or humanists, naively think of as creativity or meaning. Kaufmann's core disagreement with many of those who date the emergence of monotheism to the eighth century is not simply his claim that monotheism emerged earlier than that; more importantly, his disagreement lies in his claim that monotheism need not be reduced to a reaction to geopolitical trends that affected ancient Israel. By assuming that monotheism's emergence should be, or even could be, explained by geopolitical events (an assumption that none of the scholars in question pause to defend), these scholars fail to grapple with the nature of human creativity.

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[36] On Kaufmann's rejection of what we now call reductionism in Religious Studies, see esp. Schweid, "Biblical Critic," 416–18. To be sure, Kaufmann's well-taken emphasis on the power of ideas in shaping history and his polemic against overemphasizing materialist forces can be taken too far; see Berger, "Religion," 12-13 for an example.

[37] On Cohen as an anti-historicist thinker, see David Myers, *Resisting History: Historicism and Its Discontents in German-Jewish Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003) 35–67.

[38] On various meanings of the term "historicism," some pejorative and some favorable, see my remarks in Benjamin D. Sommer, "Dating Pentateuchal Texts and the Perils of Pseudo-Historicism," in *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research* (ed. Thomas B. Dozeman, Konrad Schmid, and Baruch J. Schwartz; FAT 78; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 101–8. I should note that I am far from reviling historicism; on the contrary, I apply the adjectives "shallow" and "nihilist" to some forms of historicism precisely because historicism need not be either of these. Like Kaufmann, it is precisely as a historicist that I object to these forms of historicism; what I protest is the unhappy combination of reductionism with an unsophisticated form of historicism, as I explain at greater length in "Dating." I am pleased to thank Ronald Hendel, Christoph Uehlinger, and Esther Hamori for encouraging me to express myself more clearly on this matter.

It should be noticed that the first and third factors I mention here appear to be harmonious with each other, but closer inspection reveals them to be contradictory. If, as Kaufmann posits in the third element I mentioned just now, the origin of monotheism is beyond reduction to a historical factor, then attempts to date its emergence are likely to amount to so much striving after the wind. If we cannot know how human genius created the idea of monotheism, then we cannot ascertain when monotheism arose with any confidence whatsoever. It may be true that the Pentateuchal sources JE, P, and D all date the emergence of monotheism to the time of Moses, or at least point to the age of Moses as especially crucial in the development and spread of monotheism in the nation Israel. But Kaufmann hardly claims that the Pentateuchal sources themselves date to Moses' day; he regards all of them as products of pre-exilic, Iron Age Israel. It follows that we cannot know very much about the historical Moses of the late Bronze Age, assuming he once existed; we can only know how Moses was recollected or constructed in the Iron Age, when all the Pentateuchal sources (as opposed to the later Torah book that encompasses JE, P, and D) were composed. It may be the case that by the time these documents were composed monotheism had long existed, but the date of its emergence is simply shrouded in a mist that empirical, historical research cannot penetrate. In his dating of the origin of monotheism, Kaufmann's opposition to a shallow if common form of historicism leads him to a reaction that is no less shallow.

1.3. Some Texts

Before we turn to examples of recent approaches comparable to Kaufmann's, it will be useful to review a few familiar texts that exemplify qualitative monotheism or the monotheism of transcendence. The *locus classicus* occurs in Deuteronomy 4:

> Take care—for this is a life-and-death point—lest you look up to the heavens and, seeing the sun and the moon and the stars, the whole host of heaven, you allow yourselves to be seduced to bow down to them and worship them—those gods, whom Yhwh your God allotted to all the peoples under the heavens (אשר חלק ה' אלהיך אתם לכל העמים תחת כל־השמים); Yhwh took you, on the other hand, and led you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, so that you belong to Him, as His private possession, to this very day. You have been shown; indeed you know: Yhwh is God; there is none other than Him. (Deut 4:15, 19–20, 35)

This passage tells us in verse 19 that there are many deities, to whom Yhwh has assigned various roles, yet it goes on to tell us in verse 35 that there is none other than Yhwh. There is no contradiction between these two verses: the gods have their roles only because Yhwh assigned those roles to them. Consequently, one can rightly say that there is none other than He, for He is

at a wholly other level from the many gods. He is thus the only true deity. Another biblical passage relevant to our concerns reads:

> When the Highest One gave the nations their possessions,
> When He divided humanity,
> He established the boundaries of nations
> In accordance with the number of the gods.[39]
> Indeed Yhwh's share is His nation,
> Jacob, His very own inheritance. (Deut 32:8–9)

According to the conception in this second passage, just as there were seventy gods, so there were seventy nations,[40] each of which had its own god. (Thus Ashur received responsibility for the Assyrians, and Marduk for the Babylonians, though Deuteronomy does not condescend to mention these minor gods by name.) But the high God Yhwh kept one nation as His own property, and it was their responsibility to pray only to Him. (For this concept in Deuteronomy see also 29:25.)[41]

To be sure, if we read verses 8–9 outside their textual setting in Deuteronomy (which is to say, if we read these verses decontextually and thus, in a sense, midrashically), it would be possible to speculate that עליון and ה' are not the same person, and that this text is not monotheistic.[42] It is entirely

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[39] My translation follows the old text preserved in the 4QDeut[j, q]; cf. similar readings in LXX (κατὰ ἀριθμὸν ἀγγέλων θεοῦ, or, in some mss., κατὰ ἀριθμὸν υἱῶν θεοῦ) and related readings in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan. The issue is widely discussed; see especially the helpful treatment of the issues in this verse and in 32:43 in Jeffrey Tigay, *Deuteronomy* (JPSTC; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 513–18, as well as the useful summary of the versions in Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 269.

[40] On the stereotypical use of the number seventy here and its wider context, see Mark Smith, *Origins*, 55, and cf. 48–49.

[41] The understanding of these verses I present here is hardly new; it was already set forth in detail in the twelfth century by Nachmanides in his commentary to Lev 18:25. See Alon Goshen-Gottstein, "Other Gods in Ramban's Thought: Adapted Conceptions and Their Implications for Possible Connections to Other Religions" (in Hebrew), in *'Al Pi Ha-Be'er: Studies in Jewish Philosophy and in Halakhic Thought Presented to Gerald Blidstein* (eds. U. Ehrlich, H. Kreisel, and D. Lasker; Beersheba: Ben Gurion University Press, 2008), 28–62. Interestingly, Nachmanides arrived at this interpretation even without the text of Deut 32:9 preserved in the Septuagint and 4QDeut[j, q]; Nachmanides based his reading on the MT, which reads "in accordance with the number of the children of Israel" rather than "in accordance with the number of gods." What was a possible reading for him is even stronger in light of the Septuagint and Qumran texts. For a similar reading of these verses, see Schenker, "Monothéisme," 438–41, who astutely notes that by praying to their own gods, the other nations also give glory to Yhwh, who assigned those gods to them and commanded them to pray to those gods.

[42] For this reading, see, e.g., Mark Smith, *Origins*, 48–49 and 143–44. See also the references to this reading and a balanced assessment of its contextual unlikelihood in Peter Machinist, "How Gods Die, Biblically and Otherwise: A Problem of Cosmic Restructuring," in *Reconsidering the Concept of Revolutionary Monotheism* (ed. Beate Pongratz-

possible that in a polytheistic system a high god would assign all the gods their responsibilities; indeed, in *Enuma Elish* 6:39–46, Marduk divides the gods into various groupings, and his ancestor Anshar proclaims Marduk the one whom the gods themselves obey in 6:101–120. Similarly, Anu and Enlil appoint Marduk ruler of Babylon and of the whole world in the preface to Ḫammurapi's legal collection.[43] The introduction to Ḫammurapi does not indicate that Anu and Enlil are monotheistic deities (or bitheistic co-deities); on the contrary, this act seems to represent their retirement from active duty. These examples demonstrate that in polytheism one deity can appoint another deity to a particular role, and thus Deut 32:8–9 could be read polytheistically. But in the context of the poem in which these verses appear, this reading becomes less likely, since (as Jan Joosten points out) in verses 12, 17, 21, 31, and 37 the poet "knows of other gods […but] underlines YHWH's superiority over them: the other gods are non-gods, mere djinns, שדים, their force doesn't match that of the God of Israel."[44] This theme is hammered home later in the poem, in verse 39: אני אני הוא ואין אלהים עמדי ("I, indeed I, am He, and there is no god together with Me…"). It is also underscored in verse 43 as it appears in 4QDeut[q]:

הרנינו שמים עמו[45] והשתחוו לו כל אלהים
Rejoice, O heavens, with Him,
And bow down to Him, all ye gods…

In short, when read decontextually, verses 8–9 of Deuteronomy 32 can be seen as polytheistic, but in the context of the poem as a whole this reading becomes much less likely. The setting of all these lines in the Book of Deuteronomy further bolsters a monotheistic reading of them. The phrasing in Deuteronomy 4 is especially clear in this regard.

The same theology underlies Mic 4:1–5. In the eschatological future that these verses imagine, individual nations still exist, and they still have conflicts with each other. These conflicts cannot be adjudicated by their own gods, who will not be impartial: Marduk would tend to side with Babylon and Ashur with Assyria, with warfare as the result (indeed, this is what happens in the pre-eschatological present). What will make the eschaton different is that all nations will acknowledge that Yhwh, the God dwelling on Mount Zion, is the ultimate authority, and they will travel there in order

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Leisten; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 196–97, and Jan Joosten, "Note on the Text of Deuteronomy xii 8," *VT* 57 (2007): 553–54.

43 For the text, see Roth, *Law Collections*, 76. Similarly, Anu, Enlil, Ea, Belet-ili and Ninlil acknowledge the sovereignty of Ashur in a seventh-century Assyrian prayer (Benjamin Foster, *Before the Muses. An Anthology of Akkadian Literature* [2 vols.; Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 1993], 2:700).

44 Joosten, "Note on the Text of Deuteronomy xii 8," 553.

45 Against MT, the first syllable of עמו should probably be vocalized with *ḥiriq*, not a *pataḥ*, as LXX seems to show with its rendering ἅμα αὐτῷ (the preposition ἅμα with the dative indicates *together with*).

to receive judgments relating to international conflicts: "For legal ruling comes from Zion, and Yhwh's oracle from Jerusalem" (Mic 4:2b).[46] Conflicts will be resolved by a Security Council located on Mount Zion with a membership of One and an unsurpassed ability to ensure compliance. Consequently, there will be no need for warfare, so that swords can be turned into plowshares, spears into pruning hooks (Mic 4:3). Even great nations will accept God's censure there (Mic 4:2aβ). The entire world will accept the sovereignty of Yhwh in this eschatological future. But for Micah, the world-wide recognition of Yhwh does not mean that the gods of the nations are non-existent, irrelevant, or unemployed: "For all the nations will take pride in their own gods, but we will take pride in Yhwh, our God, forever" (Mica 4:5).[47] Even in the eschaton, the other nations will relate primarily to their own gods, turning to Yhwh only when conflicts among them necessitate recourse to a higher authority. This passage from Micah makes especially clear the supreme position of Yhwh above other gods (as well as the unusually privileged place of Israel, who have the distinction of a personal relation to the supreme deity).[48] It is perfectly monotheistic, when we, sensibly, define monotheism in a qualitative manner.

1.4. Toward a More Perfect Unity?

The qualitative monotheism of these texts is not simply a primitive waystation between polytheism and true monotheism, an imperfect pre-exilic forerunner of the true monotheism that would emerge only in the post-exilic era. The suggestion that this belief is merely a developmental stage to be located on a temporal continuum assumes a flawed understanding of the history of ideas, according to which once an old belief evolves into a new one, the old one disappears. That assumption has been a stumbling block that led all too often to erroneous reconstructions of history and to unsound dating of texts. In fact, the monotheism of transcendence, with its acknowledgement of the reality of many gods, endures well into the post-exilic era. Few would doubt that the second-century BCE sage Ben-Sira is a monotheist, but he echoes Deut 32:8–9 in Sir 17:17–18: "He appointed a ruler (ἡγούμενον) for every nation, but Israel is the Lord's own portion; whom, being his firstborn, he brings up with discipline."[49] The same notion also

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[46] On תורה in the sense of "ruling" (precisely equivalent to the later Hebrew-Aramaic term פסק), see also Deut 17:8–11, Jer 18:18, Hag 2:11–13, Mal 2:7.

[47] I understand the Hebrew phrase הלך בשם following the LXX translation of התהלך בשם in Zech 10:12 as κατακαυχήσονται (from κατακαυχάομαι = to boast, be proud of, exult in).

[48] Further, as Schenker, "Monothéisme," 442, points out, the other gods really exist, but they exist only in some limited time-frame, whereas Yhwh alone exists forever.

[49] Translation from NRSV. The second of these verses (beginning with "whom") appears only in some manuscripts of the Greek Sirach (see Alfred Rahlfs, ed., *Septuaginta*, 1935 [reprint Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979], 405, note to 17 [+18]). The Hebrew original of this section is not attested in the Geniza, Qumran, or Masada texts.

appears, with an interesting twist, in Jub. 15:31–32: "There are many nations and many peoples, and they all belong to him [viz., to God], but over all of them he caused spirits to rule so that they might lead them astray from following him. But over Israel He did not cause any angel or spirit to rule because he alone is their ruler, and he will protect them."[50] A similar idea is assumed in various rabbinic passages, such as Pirqei deRabbi Eliezer 24. Moreover, this belief appears as late as the thirteenth century, in Nachmanides' commentary on the Pentateuch.[51] In his commentary to Exod 20:3 (at the words על פני) Nachmanides discusses several types of improper worship. The first of these involves the worship of gods who have genuine, if limited and derivative, power. Nachmanides acknowledges that the "other gods" whom Israelites are forbidden to worship include real beings with jurisdiction over other nations (though not over Israel, which constitutes God's personal property). These other beings, Nachmanides explains, are termed "gods" in biblical literature; they are also called "angels." Their power stems from the fact that Yhwh appointed them over specific nations, though at some point Yhwh will depose them and take direct control over the whole earth. The same idea appears in Nachmanides' commentary to Lev 18:25, where, referring to the MT of Deut 32:8–9, he arrives at the same interpretation we arrived at on the basis of the even clearer text found in LXX and Qumran.

2. Comparable Approaches to Monotheism in Recent Scholarship

Although Kaufmann's *oeuvre* remains largely unknown among European scholars, it is remarkable that some biblical critics in Europe in the past generation have arrived at positions regarding Israelite monotheism similar to Kaufmann's.

2.1. Early Monotheism

In spite of the increasing tendency of biblical scholarship, especially in Europe, to date biblical texts into the Persian and even Hellenistic periods and hence to date theological beliefs found in them accordingly, several leading figures have argued not only that monotheism (which they largely define in quantitative terms) existed in ancient Israel in the monarchic period, but also that it was not an exceptional feature limited to a theological elite; rather, the widespread nature of the exclusive worship of one deity is attested in the archaeological record. Thus Rainer Albertz writes:

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[50] O. S. Wintermute's translation, from *OTP* 2:87.
[51] See Goshen-Gottstein, "Other Gods."

> Whereas earlier scholars generally saw the exclusiveness of Israel's worship of Yhwh as an old legacy of the early period[52]…, in more recent scholarship the exact opposite has been maintained, that throughout its pre-exilic phase the religion of Israel had been a 'polytheistic religion which was no different from the religions of the surrounding world.'[53] The propagation of the sole worship of Yhwh is said to have begun only with Hosea in the eighth century, and to have been the concern of only small opposition groups (the 'Yhwh alone movement'[54]). According to this view, this movement was only able to influence society for a short period under Josiah, but then finally helped monotheism to victory in the exilic and early post-exilic period.

Albertz goes to question this newer view. He asks whether

> such a model […] can […] demonstrate plausibly why […] opposition movements [such as the 'Yhwh alone movement'] could arise […] in Israel—in contrast to all the other societies of the Near East. What drove men like Elijah, Elisha and Jehu to be discontent with the official diplomatic syncretism of Ahab, if this was customary throughout the polytheistic world of the Near East? […] It is not enough to refer to social and political crises as an explanation of such abrupt and sometimes bloody battles over religious demarcation in later Israel. For people could equally well have taken the typical polytheistic way of overcoming crises and have sought the backing of other gods (cf. Jer. 44.15-19). No, there must have been a potential for difference within Yhwh religion which distinguished it from the usual polytheistic religions, a potential to which opposition groups which saw the exclusive worship of Yhwh as the only possibility of overcoming crises could appeal. To this degree the approach of earlier scholars, who started from an inherent tendency to monolatry within Yhwh religion from the start, still has a lot to be said for it. So there must have been something in Yhwh religion which led to the formulation of the later prohibitions of alien gods. We certainly cannot speak of monotheism or even only of monolatry in the strict sense, at least in the pre-exilic period, but the claim to the sole worship of Yhwh which was made at the latest from the middle period of the monarchy onwards cannot be explained fully from the opposition to state syncretism and polytheism in this relatively late period […]; it must have had some support in the structures of Yhwh religion, which are older […] The reasons for the distinctive tendency to exclusiveness intrinsic to

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52 Albertz cites, among others, Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (2 vols.; trans. D. M. G. Stalker; Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1962–65), 1:203–41.

53 Here Albertz quotes Bernhard Lang, "Die Jhwh-Allein-Bewegung," in *Der Einzige Gott: die Geburt des biblischen Monotheismus* (ed. Bernhard Lang, Morton Smith, and Hermann Vorländer; Munich: Kösel, 1981), 53.

54 Albertz notes that this is Morton Smith's phrase. See Morton Smith, *Palestinian Parties and Politics That Shaped the Old Testament.* (2nd ed.; London: SCM Press, 1987), *passim*, esp. 11–42.

> the religion of Israel are to be sought in the extraordinary combination of social and religious factors out of which it emerged: under the extreme conditions of political liberation and a lengthy existence in the wilderness, a close personal relationship developed between the Exodus group and Yhwh.[55]

Like Kaufmann, Albertz emphasizes that the exclusivity of Israel's relationship with Yhwh stems from the earliest periods of Israel's existence, before the Exodus group so crucial to creating Israelite identity settled in Canaan. He regards widespread polytheism as a development of the later monarchic period and views it as especially prominent in royal and upper-class circles. Both Albertz and Kaufmann see an ancient norm of worshiping Yhwh exclusively, which deteriorated especially among the upper classes in monarchic times.

Nevertheless, differences between Albertz and Kaufmann are also evident, especially because Albertz recognizes complexities and ambiguities that Kaufmann rarely addresses. Albertz notes that the identity of Yhwh with the god worshiped in family piety was not always a given; the deity of family piety was not necessarily distinguished from Yhwh, but the average Israelite did not necessarily pause to identify the family deity with Yhwh either.[56] Albertz's work provides an outline of a more nuanced version of Kaufmann's thesis regarding monotheism. Thus it represents something that Kaufmann's student Menahem Haran has called for in an essay he published in 1991: a re-statement of Kaufmann's theses in ניסוח גמיש קצת יותר ודווקני קצת פחות ("a formulation that is somewhat more flexible and rather less deliberately contrary"); Haran avers that אפשר בהחלט להגמיש את עמדתו ולהמעיט משהו מן הקשיחות המובלעת בטענותיו ("it is surely possible to make his position more flexible and to minimize some of the rigidity found in his claims").[57]

In the material I quoted, at least, Albertz, like Kaufmann, avoids the shallow historicism that pervades biblical studies: "It is not enough to refer to social and political crises as an explanation of such abrupt and sometimes bloody battles over religious demarcation in later Israel." But unlike Kaufmann, he does not lean so far in the other direction as to achieve a position that is no less unthinking. Albertz does not feel a need to insist on Mosaic monotheism in a full-fledged way; indeed, he tells us that "we certainly cannot speak of monotheism or even only of monolatry in the strict sense, at least in the pre-exilic period."[58] But there is something well along on the way to monotheism already at the time of the settlement, even if it is

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55 Rainer Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period* (2 vols.; Louisville, KT: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 1:61–62 = middle of section 2.24.

56 Albertz, *History*, 1:95–99, 187.

57 Haran, "Judaism and Scripture," 70, 71. See further the English translation of these passages in this volume, p. 152.

58 Albertz, *History*, 1:62.

not "strict." Unfortunately, Albertz does not define any of these terms; he does not make clear how the "strict" monolatry or true monotheism differs from what existed in the pre-exilic era. (Here Albertz could have learned much from Kaufmann's careful discussions of his terminology.[59] By the most sensible definitions, we saw above, it is quite possible that there was a monotheistic religion at a very early period.) In any event, Albertz recognizes that Israelite peasants were not theologians and thus something much like monotheism could co-exist with polytheistic tendencies in the family religion and all the more so in the aggregate of religions practiced by several contemporaneous families.

Similarly, Othmar Keel finds early evidence of at least monolatry, or the practice of venerating only one deity, in ancient Israel. Further, Keel shows that this practice was not the work of a small elite of priests or scribes but was more widespread. In this regard his thesis about pre-exilic Israelite religion (and not just biblical religion) resembles Kaufmann's. To be sure, there are significant differences to be borne in mind as well: in particular, when Kaufmann speaks of polytheism he means, above all, the notion that divinity is embedded in nature rather than transcending it, while Keel means worship of many deities. But he provides impressive extrabiblical evidence of widespread exclusivity of worship in pre-exilic Israel, thus bolstering one of Kaufmann's central claims. In his study of a database of over 8500 ancient Near Eastern seals, Keel, along with Christoph Uehlinger, shows that Israelite seals differ from non-Israelite seals in several respects.[60] First, they tend not to portray more than one deity, in striking contrast to non-Israelite seals. Mesopotamian, Phoenician, Aramean, and Egyptian seals portray a wide variety of deities; often more than one deity is present on a single seal. This contrast suggests that Israelites really did tend to obey the command known to us from the Decalogue, "You shall not have any other gods besides Me" (Exod 20:3). Second, Israelite seals almost never provide a picture of their deity; rather, the deity is represented symbolically, most often by a sun disk. This finding suggests that Israelites, already in the early pre-exilic period, tended to obey the command, "You

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[59] E.g., his definition of "monotheism" in *Religion*, 29, 60, 121, and 226–27; his discussion of its relationship to monolatry on 137; and his distinctinon between polytheism and fetishism, 90 and 144–48.

[60] Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel* (trans. Thomas Trapp; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), which was first published in German in 1992. I have summarized information especially from chapters 5–9. On the decline of anthropomorphic representation of deities early in Iron Age Israel, see especially the useful summary in 173–74 (but note exceptions to this tendency, 306–16; 341–49). On monotheism and monolatry, see especially 277–81; on the emergence of greater polytheistic tendencies in the late pre-exilic period, see 323–49; on a reaction to this development and a greater stress on avoiding any portrayals of the deity, even symbolic ones such as a sun disk, see 354–67.

should not make any sculpted image or picture" of a deity (Exod 20:4).[61] Evidence of polytheism in ancient Israelite seals does crop up here and there, especially in the seventh century B.C.E, but vastly less often than in seals from other cultures.[62]

Keel and Uehlinger show that statuary and graffiti provide similar evidence. Precisely as Israel begins to emerge in the highlands of Canaan early in the Iron Age, anthropomorphic representations of deities became significantly less common in those highlands, though they never disappear completely even in Israelite contexts. Of course, seals provide evidence regarding the religious practice and by implication, the religious beliefs of an elite within Israelite and Judean society: they tell us about the lives of those people who owned enough property to warrant having a seal for use in legal transactions. But the population of seal owners went well beyond the narrow confines of the Yhwh-alone party as scholars like Morton Smith imagined that party.[63] Owners of seals were not limited to a selection of priests or Levites with peculiar, highly atypical beliefs. For this reason, Keel's work bolsters Kaufmann's claim that exclusive worship of Yhwh was the norm in ancient Israel and not only among the minority who composed the texts preserved in the Bible. Like Albertz, however, Keel avoids the inflexible formulations so characteristic of Kaufmann. Keel's textured and nuanced examination of extrabiblical evidence does not lead ineluctably to the

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61 This finding is in accord with the conclusion of Tryggve N.D. Mettinger, *No Graven Image? Israelite Aniconism in Its Ancient Near Eastern Context* (ConBOT; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1995), 145. There Mettinger discusses Israelite aversion to images in the larger context of Northwest Semitic religions, which displayed similar characteristics, though to a lesser degree, already in the Bronze Age. Consequently, Mettinger concludes, "Israelite aniconism is as old as Israel itself and not a late innovation. The express prohibition of images is just the logical conclusion of a very long development" (145). For further defense of this thesis, see Tryggve N.D. Mettinger, "Israelite Aniconism: Developments and Origins," in *The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (ed. Karel van der Toorn; Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 173–204; Tryggve N.D. Mettinger, "A Conversation with My Critics: Cultic Image or Aniconism in the First Temple," in *Essays on Ancient Israel in Its Near Eastern Context. A Tribute to Nadav Na'aman* (eds. Yairah Amit et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 273–96; Ronald Hendel, "Aniconism and Anthropomorphism in Ancient Israel," in *The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (ed. Karel van der Toorn; Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 205–28, and Theodore Lewis, "Divine Images and Aniconism in Ancient Israel," *JAOS* 118 (1998): 36–53.

62 Uehlinger later recanted these conclusions, arguing that pre-exilic Israelite religion was thoroughly polytheistic; see Christoph Uehlinger, "Anthropomorphic Cult Statuary in Iron Age Palestine and the Search for Yhwh's Cult Images," in *The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (ed. Karel van der Toorn; Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 97–155. The treatment of the evidence in the earlier work remains the more convincing. See the critique of the later work of Uehlinger in Mettinger, "Conversation," 278–81.

63 See Morton Smith, *Palestinian*, 11–42.

uncompromising articulation of this point that Kaufmann demands: Keel's work suggests that exclusive worship of Yhwh was typical in pre-exilic Israel, but it does not prove that exceptions to this tendency were vanishingly rare.

Jeffrey Tigay came to a similar conclusion on the basis of Israelite and Judean onomastica, which overwhelming mention the deity Yhwh and fairly rarely mention other deities.[64] Patrick D. Miller arrived at the same thesis on the basis of examining divine names appearing in Israelite inscriptions from the ninth to the sixth centuries—which, he found, mention only one deity: Yhwh.[65] (Miller discusses not the personal names of humans mentioned in these inscriptions, as Tigay did, but assertions made in the text of the inscriptions themselves.) I think it is fair to say that Keel, Tigay, and Miller provided the first real evidence on behalf of Kaufmann's thesis that the exclusive worship of Yhwh was widespread in pre-exilic Israel. Insofar as Kaufmann's claim was based only on biblical evidence, it was more an assertion or perhaps an extrapolation than an argument (and, as we have seen, Kaufmann's claim in significant respects contradicts the claims of many biblical authors). But Keel, Tigay, and Miller examined evidence that went beyond the restricted circles responsible for producing and transmitting biblical texts. They show that if we were to write a history of Israelite belief and practice on the basis of epigraphic and iconographic evidence, we would have to conclude that the Yhwh-alone party was dominant in much of the pre-exilic era. As in Albertz's case, it is important to see how much more nuanced the work of Keel, Tigay, and Miller is when compared to Kaufmann's. For example, Keel does not ignore, minimize, or argue away the exceptions to a more general trend, such as the finds from the seventh century showing evidence of polytheism. Here again we find someone producing precisely what Haran hoped to see: a softer, more realistic version of Kaufmann's hypothesis.

2.2. The Definition of Monotheism

Several scholars in the past half century arrived independently at a definition of monotheism remarkably similar to Kaufmann's. Adrian Schenker, in his 1997 article on Israelite monotheism, argues that "monotheism must not be defined exclusively in terms of being and non-being. It suffices that

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[64] Jeffrey Tigay, *You Shall Have No Other Gods: Israelite Religion in the Light of Hebrew Inscriptions* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986) and, more briefly, Jeffrey Tigay, "Israelite Religion: The Onomastic and Epigraphic Evidence," in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross* (ed. P.D. Miller, P.D. Hanson, and S.D. McBride; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 157–94. Note also Morton Smith's tantalizing reference to Tigay's work in the preface to the second edition of *Palestinian Parties*, vii.

[65] Patrick D. Miller, "The Absence of the Goddess in Israelite Religion," in *Israelite Religion and Biblical Theology* (JSOTSupp; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 198 n. 2.

a god should be of a nature or a degree so different from all other gods that this deity transcends them in a manner analogous to the transcendence of the gods in relation to human beings."[66] Schenker sensibly refers to this sort of monotheism as "a monotheism of transcendence which encompasses polytheism."[67] It is a monotheism of transcendence in the sense that the one God is qualitatively different from all other beings, whether heavenly or mundane. It encompasses polytheism (in the numerical sense of this term, though not in Kaufmann's sense of the term as a theology in which deity is embedded within nature and the world) because it acknowledges the existence of other heavenly beings. Schenker employs the term monotheism in a flexible way that reflects the realities of lived religions (in particular, those of the ancient Near East) and succeeds in viewing monotheism from within the religious world of the ancient Near East. Consequently, he is sensitive to how monotheism looks as it arises in the world of polytheism—or against the world of polytheism, if you prefer. Schenker notes that in biblical monotheism, humanity and the gods/angels are basically on the same subservient level, linked with each other in their ontological difference from Yhwh.[68] We may provide further support for Schenker's point by nothing that in 1 Kgs 22:19–23, Isaiah 6, Isaiah 40, and Zechariah 3, a human being attends the heavenly council's meeting, and in the two cases from Isaiah, the human even speaks during the meeting.[69] This circumstance underscores the fact that humanity and the gods or angels who make up the council are basically on the same ontological level in Hebrew scripture. This ontological similarity of humanity and the gods becomes apparent in Pss 29:1–2, 103:20–22, and 148:1–3. There humans call on the gods to praise Yhwh, just as humans call on each other to praise Yhwh so often in other psalms. In these passages, human beings and gods or angels pray together as members of a single congregation located in two places, heaven and earth. Moreover, in these passages the humans take the role of liturgical leadership, for they are the choir-masters, directing the gods to sing.[70] (The similarity of humanity and the gods may also be reflected in Ps 8:6, ותחסרהו מעט מאלהים.[71]) Schenker's description of a type of monotheism that encompasses but also transcends numerical polytheism is useful precisely

66 Schenker, "Monothéisme," 437–38.
67 Schenker, "Monothéisme," 448.
68 See Schenker, "Monothéisme," 438.
69 On Isaiah 40 as involving a divine council attended by the prophet, see Frank Moore Cross, "The Council of YHWH in Second Isaiah," *JNES* 12 (1953): 274–77. The prophet speaks in the council according to the LXX and 1QIsa[a] versions of verse 6.
70 On these psalms as examples of the heavenly prayer *Gattung*, see Benjamin D. Sommer, "A Little Higher Than Angels: Psalm 29 and the Genre of Heavenly Praise," in *Built by Wisdom, Established by Understanding: Essays on Biblical and Near Eastern Literature in Honor of Adele Berlin* (ed. Maxine L. Grossman; Bethesda, MD: University Press of Maryland, 2013), 148–53.
71 On Ps 8:6, see especially LXX, Targum, Ibn Ezra, and Radak.

because it is so supple. He points toward the extent to which these two theologies can also overlap; what is philosophically or theoretically a polarity is, in lived religion, a continuum.[72]

Similar approaches appear in the work of other scholars, though not all of them use the term monotheism to describe the theology in question. For example, P. D. Miller argues that Yhwh had absorbed the powers of all other deities at an early point in Israelite history, even though worship of deities other than Yhwh persisted.[73] Norbert Lohfink acknowledges that what he terms "theoretical monotheism" appears only in the exilic era, but argues that an exclusive focus on one God, under whom all other heavenly beings are anonymously subservient, appears already in the period of the monarchy and perhaps before.[74] Rather than cataloguing biblical scholars who adopt this approach,[75] I would like to attend to two scholars outside biblical studies who evince a similar approach as well.

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[72] The difference between Schenker and Kaufmann here is rhetorical, rather than a matter of substance. Kaufmann does not use the words "monotheism" and "polytheism" in the numerical sense, and so he might speak rather of a monotheism that encompasses and transcends the worship of many deities. But this rhetorical difference is significant, because the phrasing Schenker uses more readily acknowledges the messiness of lived religion and the potential for overlap between what seem to be philosophically distinct positions.

[73] Patrick D. Miller, "Absence," 202–3.

[74] Norbert Lohfink, "Zur Geschichte der Diskussion über den Monotheismus im Alten Israel," in *Gott, der Einzige: zur Entstehung des Monotheismus in Israel* (ed. Ernst Haag; Freiburg: Herder, 1985), 22–25.

[75] For this definition of monotheism, see James Barr, "The Problem of Israelite Monotheism," *Glasgow University Oriental Society* 17 (1957–58): 52–62; David Petersen, "Israel and Monotheism: The Unfinished Agenda," in *Canon, Theology, and Old Testament Interpretation: Essays in Honor of Brevard S. Childs* (eds. Gene Tucker, David Petersen, and Robert Wilson; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 97. So also Faur, "Biblical," 4. Cf. the similar remark of Morton Smith: "Worship of several deities is compatible with monotheism—one has only to believe, for example, that the supreme ('true') deity has created beings inferior to himself but superior to men and has ordained that men should worship them. This belief is expressed in Deut. 4.19 and 32.8" (Morton Smith, *Palestinian*, 165 n. 11). See also Werner H. Schmidt, *The Faith of the Old Testament: A History* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 379 and C. J. Labuschagne, *The Incomparability of Yhwh in the Old Testament* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1966), 148. Georg Fohrer, *History of Israelite Religion* (trans. David Green; Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1972), 103, suggests an identical description of Israelite religion, though he does not term such a belief system monotheism.

An interesting and instructive case is Zenger's "Jahwistisches Werk." Zenger does not apply the term "monotheism" to J, describing that source rather as "unpolemically monolatrous" (53). He regards later expansions of J (which are largely identical with what classical source critics call E) as "polemically monolatrous," and dates true monotheism to the sixth century. The reasoning behind this use of terms, apparently, rests on assumptions: One is that ideas evolve in a straightforward and largely unidirectional manner, so that texts that come after J must be more advanced, and true monotheism can emerge only at the end of a long process that scholars must reconstruct. The second is that a text can only be termed monotheistic if it specifically denies the existence of other gods; for

In his recently published *Babylonian Creation Myths*, the late Assyriologist W. G. Lambert argues that in the Late Babylonian period (henceforth: LB—from the middle to the end of the first millennium BCE) a Marduk monotheism emerged. During this period—though not earlier—"in some circles Marduk absorbed other deities into himself, so that a kind of monotheism resulted."[76] Lambert claims that in at least one Late Babylonian god-list, many of the names of various major deities are presented as names of Marduk, so that one might say that these other gods themselves came to be seen as manifestations of Marduk that focus our attention on particular roles. Thus Nergal was Marduk's name in his role as god of warfare, and Shamash was his name in his role as god of justice. Nevertheless, Lambert avers, "there are the hundreds of minor gods and goddesses who were probably not included" in a list of Marduk's name. "But once the major members of the pantheon have become aspects of Marduk merely, there is no escape from the conclusion that this is an assertion of monotheism."[77] This theology is fairly late, and fairly short-lived; it is evident only in the LB period, and not, for example, in earlier documents such as the Introduction to Ḫammurapi's laws or in *Enuma Elish*, nor is it always present in earlier god-lists, even god-lists with the triple-column format found in the LB list Lambert discusses as evincing monotheism. This Marduk monotheism resulted from the extension to its logical extreme of what other scholars have called "summodeism," or the tendency of one deity to absorb the roles, capacities and even persons of other deities.[78] What is interesting from our point of view is the fact that the existence of multiple local and minor deities does not prevent Lambert from calling this theology monotheism. Monotheism for Lambert, as for Kaufmann, Cohen, and Schenker, is not a matter of counting; it is a matter of power. Because Marduk absorbed all the important powers, at least in the particular god-list Lambert discusses, he is the One God, and the fact that unimportant deities existed alongside Marduk does not alter this fundamental fact.

Zenger, monotheism must always be explicitly polemical. For this reason, he dates true monotheism to the sixth century. In fact, however, a monotheistic text need not specifically deny the existence of other gods; Zenger's assumption that a monotheistic text must specifically attack polytheism would render a great many Jewish, Christian, and Muslim texts non-monotheistic. If we jettison the evolutionary assumption and the extraordinarily narrow definition of monotheism Zenger employs, we can readily conclude that J is a monotheistic text.

76 W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 264.

77 Lambert, *Babylonian Creation*, 265.

78 On the term, see, e.g., Machinist, "How Gods Die," 230–31; Mark Smith, *God in Translation: Deities in Cross-Cultural Discourse in the Biblical World* (FAT 57; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 167–74.

Significantly, Lambert does not regard *Enuma Elish* as monotheistic.[79] There, Marduk ascends to Enlil-status, but other significant deities remain distinct from Marduk, and they have their own power, so that Marduk is king of the gods but not a qualitatively monotheistic deity. (To use the metaphor I suggested earlier: the council of deities under Marduk recalls the British cabinet, not the American.) The same is true for another remarkable text Lambert published in his recent volume. That text resembles crucial monotheistic texts in the Hebrew Bible on a surface level, but on closer examination the differences between the texts in question are just as meaningful as the similarities. I refer here to a Seleucid-era tablet that preserves an Old Babylonian or Cassite-era text, to which Lambert gives the title "Enmešarra's Defeat."[80] Part of this text describes how various deities took responsibility for various nations:

> After Marduk . [. . .
> He did not grasp his crown [. . .
> The rule of heaven and nether world he [. . .
> [He] perfected the regulations . [. . .
> He ascended and sat in the heavens,
> He took up residence in the abode of Anu magnificently.
> Bēl took Babylon,
> Nabû took Borsippa,
> Nergal took Cuthah,
> Zababa took Kish,
> Šamaš took Sippar,
> Sîn took Ur,
> Adad took Bīt Karkara,
> Enlil took Nippur,
> Uraš took Dilbat,
> Erimabinutuku took Isin,
> All the gods got land.[81]

On one level, the picture here resembles the passage we examined above from Deuteronomy 4 and 32: various deities receive responsibility for various places and peoples, and this divvying up of areas of sovereignty is connected with Marduk's ascent to the heavenly throne. Yet we are not told that Marduk assigned these roles; rather, the various gods took these roles (the verb used in all these lines is *iṣṣabat*). In Deuteronomy Yhwh was the subject, and the various unnamed gods were the objects (more precisely, the dative) of the verb's action. But in this Babylonian text the various gods are named, and they are, tellingly, the grammatical subjects in the lines

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79 Lambert, *Babylonian Creation*, 265.
80 Lambert, *Babylonian Creation*, 281–300.
81 Lambert, *Babylonian Creation*, 292–95.

describing their powers.[82] Further, the very fact that the immediately preceding lines describe Marduk's ascent to Anu's status itself argues against reading this passage as monotheistic: a monotheistic deity cannot, by definition, achieve monotheistic status in historical or mythic time; such a deity can only have that status.[83] The fact that Deuteronomy, like all other biblical documents, tells us nothing of Yhwh's origins (it never attempts to explain where He came from) underscores this difference between Deuteronomy 4 and 32, on the one hand, and "Enmešarra's Defeat," on the other.

One additional element of Lambert's reading of this text recalls Kaufmann's discussion of monotheism. Immediately, after the lines I just quoted, the text goes on to report that "a voice proclaimed from heaven" (*ištu šamê ilsâ zaqīqi*).[84] Lambert discusses the origin of this voice: "In a monotheistic world, the supreme and only god is of course responsible, but in a polytheistic world one asks, Whose voice? The only possible answer is that the voice speaks for the Destinies—a set of regulations governing the universe, including the gods. If any one god had been responsible, this would surely have been stated."[85] This notion of a force of destiny stronger than the gods is at the very heart of Kaufmann's definition of polytheism, and it is one of the most crucial elements that differentiates between biblical religion and polytheism.[86] Lambert's reference to the same idea shows how closely the independent approaches of Lambert and Kaufmann match each other. To be sure, we may wonder about Lambert's understanding of the line itself. The noun *zaqīqu* is translated in CAD as "ghost, phantom; haunted place; god of dreams; soul,"[87] which would considerably alter Lambert's claim regarding the meaning of this line. Even if Assyriologists

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82 The same is true in *Atraḫasis* I:7–18, where the major gods take their areas of dominion.

83 The same is true of the second-millennium hymn, "The Exaltation of Ishtar," discussed by Goldstein, "New Look," 13–16. For all their similarity to Deut 32:8–9 and 43, they are unalterably polytheistic in the roles they describe Anu, Enlil, and Ea as playing. If we did not speculate that in an earlier literary setting Elyon and Yhwh were different deities, there would be no polytheistic reading of Deut 32:8–9; in the context in which it stands, at least, the poem known to us from Deuteronomy does not allow such a reading.

84 Lambert, *Babylonian Creation*, 294–95, line 18.

85 Lambert, *Babylonian Creation*, 283.

86 Kaufmann, *Toledot*, 1:245–47, 447–48; cf. Kaufmann, *Religion*, 73–74. On the importance of fate as a force beyond the realm of divinity in ancient Greek religion, see Walter F. Otto, *The Homeric Gods: The Spiritual Significance of Greek Religion* (trans. Moses Hadas; New York: Thames and Hudson, 1979), 263–64, 267; W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), 130, and Albert Henrichs, "Moira," in *Der Neue Pauly: Enzyklopädie der Antike* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2000), 8:340–43, esp. 342.

87 *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (21 vols.; Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1956–2006), 21:58–60. Jeremy Black, Andrew George, and Nicholas Postgate, eds., *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian* (SANTAG 5; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999), 445, 448, identifies *zāqīqu* with *zīqîqu* and renders "wind, breeze, phantom, nothingness, haunted place, dream," an understanding that also, so far as I can see, seems to undermine Lambert's interpretation of the line.

dispute Lambert's interpretation of this specific line, what remains interesting for our concerns is the distinction between monotheism and polytheism Lambert assumes here. Lambert's use of these terms is identical to, though independent of, Kaufmann's.

Because this issue of a realm transcending that of the gods is crucial to the distinction between monotheism and polytheism for Kaufmann (and for Lambert), it is worth addressing Mark Smith's critique of Kaufmann on this issue. Smith writes, "There is little, if any, evidence for an independent order having mastery over the deities in either Ugaritic or Mesopotamian mythologies."[88] In fact, the facts Kaufmann emphasizes—the mortality of gods; their youth in comparison with the universe itself; their use of magic, a technology available to humans as well, to effect change in the world—clearly denote the existence of an independent order in both mythologies.[89] Smith's protest notwithstanding, the realm of the divinity in both Ugaritic and Mesopotamian literature is deeply embedded in the world of matter, a circumstance that differs from what we find in the Hebrew Bible as a whole. Smith goes on to assert there, "No idea of such an independent order of 'fate' exists in ancient Middle Eastern mythologies. Ugaritic lacks a word even approximating this notion, and Akkadian *šimtu*, usually taken to mean 'fate,' refers to a 'determined course' that can be changed." It is true that the Greek thinkers articulate this idea with reference to the terms μοῖρα and ἀνάγκη, whereas Akkadian texts do not use *šimtu* in the same way. Nevertheless, in both narrative and ritual contexts, Akkadian texts make clear the gods' subservience to forces greater than themselves. The same idea is expressed differently in Greek and Akkadian literature, and this difference of expression is hardly surprising. As a rule, what Greek thinkers state in abstract terms ancient Near Eastern thinkers convey through concrete examples.[90] Thus the contrast Smith draws merely points to a typical

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88 Mark Smith, *Origins*, 12; see further his remarks at 201 n. 70.

89 See *Toledot*, 1:286–358, esp. 325–43; *Religion*, 21–42, esp. 31–37.

90 On this difference, see Stephen Geller, *Sacred Enigmas: Literary Religion in the Hebrew Bible* (London: Routledge, 1996), 6; for an Akkadian example, see Stephen Geller, "Some Sound and Word Plays in the First Tablet of the Old Babylonian *Atraḫasīs* Epic," in *The Frank Talmage Memorial Volume* (ed. B. Walfish; Haifa: Haifa University Press, 1992), 1:63–70, esp. 65–66. See also Henri H. Frankfort and Henriette A. Frankfort, "Myth and Reality," in *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man: An Essay on Speculative Thought in the Ancient Near East* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 6–15, and Geoffrey Miller, *The Ways of a King: Legal and Political Ideas in the Bible* (JAJSup 7; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 16–20. On Mesopotamian magical rituals performed by humans as appealing to a realm beyond the gods, see H. W. F. Saggs, *The Encounter with the Divine in Mesopotamia and Israel* (London: Athlone Press, 1978), 131–33, who argues that the Mesopotamian omen literature was at its core non-theistic: The omens did not reveal the will of a god who was communicating with humans; rather, they reflected the extraordinarily complex and interconnected structure of the universe itself. "The omen thus represented not a god's decision upon a situation but rather a recognized correlation between past and future phenomena. The

difference between intellectual expression in these cultures, not to the absence of this concept among Babylonian and Assyrian thinkers.

A very similar understanding of monotheism has also been proposed by a scholar of African religions, E. Bọlaji Idowu, in what is widely regarded as a classic study, *Olódùmarè: God in Yoruba Belief*. Idowu discusses what he terms "diffuse monotheism": "a monotheism in which the good Deity delegates certain portions of His authority to certain divine functionaries who work as they are commissioned by Him."[91] These other deities, Idowu explains, are know as the *orìşà*, and they include gods of wisdom, justice, iron tools, wrath, cultivation, and other specific areas: "All together, the *orìşà* form the Yoruba pantheon. Olódùmarè is *not* one among them. He is 'wholly other' than they. But they are under His constant vigilance and control, and to Him they owe absolute fealty."[92] The diffuse monotheism of the Yoruba as Idowu describes it is not identical to biblical monotheism in Kaufmann's presentation. The god Olódùmarè has become more distant, though not otiose, and it is normal and acceptable in Yoruba culture that people pray to the lower deities of the *orìşà*.[93] But the theological structure is similar: the lower gods are ontologically distinct from the supreme being, and subservient to that being.[94] For Idowu, as for Kaufmann, Cohen,

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gods came into the matter only as the divine beings able to intervene to cut the web" (132). To be sure, other scholars see more of a role for deities in magical rituals. Thus Jean Bottéro, *Religion in Ancient Mesopotamia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 170–85, emphasizes the religious and god-centered nature of divination. Bottéro notes that before performing some omens, the human practitioners would beseech the gods, which suggests that gods could inscribe a message into the object utilized for the omen. Saggs argues that these passages are late theistic additions to what was basically a non-theistic literature. He points out that the deities invoked in these occasional passages remain remarkably lacking in specific or personal characteristics. Both Saggs and Bottéro provide intelligent readings of the texts at hand, which result from the fact that both understandings of omen literature obtained in various places and times. Nonetheless, the presence of the understanding Saggs demonstrates indicates a fascinating contrast between Mesopotamian polytheism and the religion of biblical texts (though not the religion of all ancient Israelites): at least at times the powers inherent in matter are thought of as independent of divinity in the former but not the latter.

91 E. Bọlaji Idowu, *Olódùmarè: God in Yoruba Belief* (London: Longmans, 1962), 204.

92 Idowu, *Olódùmarè*, 62.

93 As Job Jindo points out the me, this corresponds to what Kaufmann sees as having taken place in the Second Temple period, viz., the rise of angelology and God's exaltation to a more distant status; see *Toledot*, 1:231–34.

94 Patrick Ryan, "'Arise, O God!' The Problem of 'Gods' in West Africa," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 11 (1980): 166, notes that Olódùmarè has no priests, no festival, and no cult-group. He explains that this deity does not belong to the same category as the orìşà at all, and it is members of the latter category who have priests, festivals, and cult-groups based on paternal or maternal lineage. "*Olodumare* is sometimes, if rarely, referred to as an *orişa*, but the usage seems to be uncommon. [Here Ryan refers to Idowu, *Olódùmarè* 61.] If this limited linguistic usage may be taken as evidence that *Olodumare* (*Olorun*) was once considered to be one of the *orişa*, at least in some parts of Yorubaland, little memory remains today of such a conception of the transcendent. The

Schenker, and Lambert, monotheism is about quality, not quantity; about transcendence, not counting.

Idowu's perspective is heuristically useful for biblical scholars not only because of its similarities to Kaufmann's, but also because Idowu worked with a living religion rather than one known only through ancient texts and artifactual finds. As a result, certain weaknesses are more evident in Idowu's presentation than they are in Kaufmann's. This emerges, for instance, when Idowu writes,

> The Yoruba knows, in spite of all this heavy structure of theocratic, governmental arrangements, that at the head of all, and controlling all is Olódùmarè, and that there is no time, really, when He is far away from them, or when they keep Him absolutely out of their minds. They may appear to live their lives in absolute devotion to the divinities, but underneath all their acts of worship is the deep consciousness that Olódùmarè is above all and ultimately controls all issues.[95]

Idowu maintains that a deep consciousness of Olódùmarè-monotheism lies beneath what appears to be absolute devotion to other deities. It is difficult to read this and similar passages in Idowu's work, however, without wondering whether that deep consciousness of Olódùmarè-monotheism is native to the Yoruba or a creation of Idowu's interpretive lens. Idowu had his own commitment to monotheism: he was both a scholar of religion trained at Cambridge and the University of London and a Methodist clergyman; in fact, from 1972 to 1984 he served as the president and later Patriarch of the Methodist Church of Nigeria. Further, his writing evinces his admiration for his own Yoruba heritage.[96] It is at least possible that his commitment to monotheism along with his esteem for Yoruba culture may have led him to discover Yoruba monotheism where there was none. Specialists have read Idowu's work with varying degrees of agreement in this matter. On the one hand, some later scholars of African religion (who are likely to be more methodologically skeptical and aware of problems of unintentional bias and subjectivity) have been receptive to Idowu's claim. Thus Patrick Ryan points out that Semitic and European categories are ill-suited to describe Yoruba conceptions of the transcendent. Nevertheless, he affirms Idowu's reading of Olódùmaré as ontologically distinct from the *òrişà* and transcendent in comparison with them. Indeed, Ryan writes that

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complete absence of any patrilineage dedicated to *Olodumare* (*Olorun*) as well as the almost total lack of any direct ritual worship of the Supreme Being may be taken not as indicators of *Olodumare*'s otiose nature but of His absolute transcendence. He is not merely God above the gods."

95 Idowu, *Olódùmarè*, 50.

96 For a sense of both these aspects of his worldview, see further the remembrance written by C. Njideka Ebisi in the reprint of Idowu, *Olódùmarè*, published by African Tree Press in 1994, pp. vii–ix.

> both the Yoruba and Akan populations of West Africa are better equipped linguistically than are Semites, Greeks, Romans and their inheritors to express the absolute uniqueness of God. There is no need for *Olodumare* (*Olorun*) […] to arise above the "other gods," as Psalm 82 bids Him. It would seem, in fact, that even before Muslims and Christians arrived in the West African forest zone, where both the Akan and Yoruba peoples live, speakers of Yoruba and Akan were assured of the supremacy of the One Whom a modern theologian calls "the incomprehensible term of human transcendence."[97]

One finds similar discussions of the concept of a God who is distinct from lower-ranking powers in the work of both African scholars such as John Mbuti and Europeans such as Edward E. Evans-Pritchard.[98] On the other hand, some scholars including Robin Horton, Ezra Chitando, and C. N. Ubah have criticized work by Idowu and similar scholars as fatally flawed by those scholars' faith commitments.[99] (In this regard, a European

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97 Ryan, "Arise," 169–70. For the phrase "the incomprehensive…," Ryan citers Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity* (trans. William V. Dych; New York: Seabury Press, Crossroads, 1978), 454.

98 On this trend among anthropologists and scholars of African religion, see Robin Horton, "Judaeo-Christian Spectacles: Boon or Bane to the Study of African Religions?" *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 96 (1984): 396–97. For summaries of Evans-Pritchard's description of Nuer ideas of the divine realm (which have several points of resemblance with Yoruba views as presented by Idowu), see Mary Douglas, *Edward Evans-Pritchard* (New York: Viking Press, 1980), 94–96, 101–9, and (especially relevant to our concerns regarding the distinction between monotheism and polytheism) 116–18, and Daniel L. Pals, *Seven Theories of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 209–13. The classic study itself is Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard, *Nuer Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).

99 See Horton, "Judaeo-Christian Spectacles" (and in particular on diffused monotheism, 402–406); C. N. Ubah, "The Supreme Being, Divinities and Ancestors in Igbo Traditional Religion: Evidence from Otanchara and Otanzu," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* (1982): 90–105, esp. 91–94; as well as the balanced discussion by Ezra Chitando, "African Christian Scholars and the Study of African Traditional Religions: A Re-Evaluation," *Religion* 30 (2000): 391–97. Horton's detailed study is especially compelling, in spite of its tendency to essentialize what he calls "Judaeo-Christian" beliefs and practices (by which he means Christian, more specifically, modern Western Protestant beliefs and practices) and his tendency to ignore crucial differences within Christianity and within Judaism. Thus his distinction (422, 425) between religious systems that emphasize communion with the divine as opposed to explanation, prediction, and control of divine forces is potentially useful. But it overlooks the fact that both tendencies exist within Judaism and within Christianity—one thinks, for example of the prominence of theurgy in various forms of Judaism: in kabbalah, in rabbinic literature, and in the Pentateuch's Priestly Document. Similarly, when Horton criticizes the imposition of "Judaeo-Christian" notions of a monotheistic God on African conceptions of a creator being (402–3), he attributes a naive view of God-concepts to Judaisms and Christianities. Thus he claims that the monotheistic creator is male, but it is noteworthy that P and Deutero-Isaiah, who stress the theme of creation perhaps most among biblical authors, are precisely the authors who suggest that Yhwh has both genders—and they do so precisely in passages that deal with creation. A similar point can

like Evans-Pritchard resembles Idowu and Mbuti in that all three share deep commitments to Christianity even as all three set out to describe African religions in a manner that is at once empirical and sympathetic.[100]) In the absence of a written corpus that scholars can independently analyze, it is difficult to make a determination, but the validity of the criticism seems at the very least plausible.

Alternatively, it is possible that in generations prior to Idowu's, some Yoruba may have asserted a monotheism of Olódùmarè in response to Muslim and Christian propagation of monotheism in Nigeria. In that case, Idowu is correct to speak of a native Olódùmarè-monotheism, but that native monotheism may have arisen in response to Islam or Christianity, in which case its similarity to biblical monotheism may not represent an independent parallel that is heuristically useful.[101] Further, even if this monotheism is a genuine feature of traditional Yoruba culture and not Idowu's creation, one may further wonder how many Yoruba worshipers participate in the consciousness of one wholly other deity's status and the *orìşà*'s subservience, and how consistently they do so. The distinction between polytheism and diffuse monotheism is conceptually quite clear, yet not all worshipers will grasp it, and some may be concerned with the distinction only some of the time.[102]

Much the same can be said of Israelite monotheism. To be sure, the biblical injunctions against worshiping other (real) deities are clearly intended to prevent the confusion that diffuse monotheism invites. But the vociferous and repetitive nature of the Bible's insistence on this point suggests that the priestly, deuteronomic, and prophetic authorities had reason to worry on this point. Indeed, even in later forms of Judaism, veneration of lower-

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be made regard the connection of the creator deity with evil in Deutero-Isaiah (at Isaiah 45:7), which Horton (402) assumes is impossible. Nonetheless, to the extent that Horton's essentialist and naive assumptions of monotheism may have been shared by scholars like Idowu, Horton's critique of Idowu's imposition of Christian categories on his African data may remain valid.

100 On this shared concern of African and European scholars, see further Horton, "Judaeo-Christian Spectacles," 428, where he mentions H.W. Turner rather than Evans-Pritchards as an example. On the influence of Evans-Pritchard's Christianity (especially, but not only, after he was received into the Catholic Church) and on his sympathetic view of African theologies, see Pals, *Seven Theories*, 223, 229 notes 27 and 30, 230 n. 46, as well as Douglas, *Evans-Pritchard*, 102–5, 114–15.

101 For a clear example of a native discovery—rather, creation—of primitive monotheism in response to Christian missionary activity and political domination, see the discussion of "primitive monotheism" centered around the Maori deity, Io, in J. Z. Smith, "The Unknown God: Myth in History," in *Imagining Religion from Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 67–90. For similar examples in Africa, see Horton, "Judaeo-Christian Spectacles," 408–10.

102 For an even more skeptical evaluation of discussions (by Idowu and similar scholars) of worshipers' attitudes toward a monotheistic being, see Horton, "Judaeo-Christian Spectacles," 410–12.

ranking deities never quite fully disappears; most religious Jews, after all, not only address these lower-ranking beings but ask for their blessing when they recite the line, ברכוני לשלום מלאכי השלום מלאכי עליון ("O angels of peace, angels of the Highest One, bless us with peace"), every Friday night when reciting the table-hymn, שלום עליכם.[103] In most cases, this sort of appeal to lower-ranking heavenly beings among rabbinic Jews does not impinge on the qualitative monotheism of the Jews in question, but one imagines that it could, and at times does, slide into a degree of veneration that threatens to do so. This is perhaps most clear among kabbalists who have practiced not only theurgy but magic, and in the development in Second Temple, rabbinic, and medieval Judaisms not only of a Jewish angelology but demonology as well. A worshiper, or a worshiping community, might stray from a qualitatively monotheistic acknowledgement of forces that serve God to a genuinely polytheistic belief in independent forces that can threaten God; indeed, it was fear of just that deviation that led medieval Jewish rationalists and even some mystics to condemn the practical kabbalah. While a monotheism of transcendence and qualitatively defined polytheism are conceptually distinct, in practice there is likely to be a much smaller a gap between them than Kaufmann allows. The conceptual problems that Idowu's work raise clarify this tension between Kaufmann's theory and the realities of lived religion.

Conclusion

Comparisons among Kaufmann and various scholars who did not know his work are useful for several reasons. First, they demonstrate how the more supple and flexible presentations of scholars such as Albertz, Keel, and Schenker offer a useful step forward from Kaufmann. In their recognition of the ambiguities inherent in monotheism and the liminal forms monotheism sometimes found in lived religions, they present a more empirically realistic and historically grounded picture, even as their basic insights remain, however unknowingly and unintentionally, Kaufmannian. Second, these more recent scholars, along with Tigay and Miller, provide crucial extrabiblical support for central claims of Kaufmann's. Third, the greater precision, sophistication, and utility of Kaufmann's definition of monothe-

[103] Rabbi Ḥaim of Volozhin (1749–1821) is said to have omitted this line precisely because the appeal to blessing from heavenly beings other than Yhwh is problematic; see the brief discussion and references in *Siddur Eizor Eiliyahu ʿal Pi Daʿat Hagra* (in Hebrew; ed. Yehoshua Cohen, Yeshayahu Vinograd, and David Cohen; Jerusalem: Kerem Eliyahu, 5760), 174–75 n. R. Ḥaim's practice is not widespread, however, even among Lithuanian-mitnagdic Jews who are Ḥaim's followers. That a single line can be seen by some authorities as evincing polytheism and by other authorities and almost all worshipers as not doing so points to the gray area that Kaufmann ignored.

ism allow for a more philosophically rigorous and religiously meaningful understanding of the contours of Israelite religion than we find in the work of Albertz and Keel; a person who has read Kaufmann can add greater depth to their richly textured treatment of extrabiblical material. Finally, skeptical consideration of Idowu's work encourages us to realize that, contrary to the rhetorical force of Kaufmann's work, monotheism and polytheism are far more closely related to each other than one might initially assume. By saying this, I am not arguing that Israelite monotheism was a chimera, a polytheism in disguise; nor am I suggesting that Israelite monotheism was an exceptional and elite outcropping amidst a sea of Israelite polytheism, or a way station on the path to a truer monotheism. Rather, I am suggesting that in every monotheistic community, whether in the Iron Age or the contemporary world, the minds of religious people are flexible and encompass what can appear to be self-contradictions. The deepest and most serious form of monotheism—which is a monotheism of quality and not quantity—can have elements of intersection with polytheism.

In significant ways, Kaufmann's approach is more accurate in its relationship to the evidence (including artifactual evidence unknown in Kaufmann's own day) than that of the majority of biblical scholars (from whom Keel, Albertz, Schenker, Tigay, and Miller also diverge). Further, it is more rigorously thought out in several respects: in its realization that monotheism is about God's independence from matter and fate, in its awareness that monotheism need not be a response to geopolitical events, and in its conclusion that there is no reason that its origin needs to be dated as late as the eighth century. But Kaufmann's approach is also deeply unrealistic insofar as he insists that monotheism and polytheism are worlds apart, and that the Israelites were so monotheistic that they could not even understand polytheism and therefore only misrepresented it. Attention to various scholars whose work resembles Kaufmann's helps us to realize that monotheism and polytheism are less polar opposites than they are variations on a theme, and they can co-exist in a single culture, and even in a single religious person's mind.[104]

[104] On the closeness of monotheism and polytheism in crucial regards, see my remarks in Benjamin D. Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 30–37, 173–74, and Doniger, *On Hinduism*, 10–20.

Response to Benjamin Sommer's "Yehezkel Kaufmann and Recent Scholarship on Monotheism"

Adrian SCHENKER

Introduction

First, I must confess that indeed I did not know Kaufmann's work on Israelite monotheism. I am all the more impressed by his pioneering research in the history of Israelite religion, and I can't but be grateful to Professor Sommer for finally paving the way for a broad reception of Kaufmann which is overdue and should have happened long ago. The language barrier (Kaufmann wrote his history of Israelite religion in Ivrit) may have played an unfortunate role in this undeserved neglect of his contribution.

At the same time, Benjamin Sommer is embedding Kaufmann's view of the Israelite religion and of its specific monotheistic outlook into present day research, with a wealth of new data which Kaufmann could not yet know and which Professor Sommer now discusses in depth. Thus he does not simply comment on Kaufmann's ideas as a historian of research in *Religionsgeschichte*. In reality he continues the scholarly debate on monotheism in ancient Israel with his own thorough contributions to it. This is a point I explicitly wish to acknowledge.

What follows are not objections to Professor Sommer's paper but rather four complementary observations.

First observation

"Polytheistic" expressions, i.e. expressions implying real existing deities besides Yhwh, occur in the Hebrew Bible in passages considered early and in others that most probably are late. Among the early texts one may cite Judg 11:24; 1 Samuel 5–6 (Dagon is no illusive deity: the Philistines do not revere an illusion; they revere a true god, but subordinate to Yhwh, much less mighty than he; the conflict between Yhwh and Dagon is not between Yhwh and an illusion but between Yhwh and a subordinate deity); Micah 4:5; the oaths, practiced everywhere in the Ancient Near East, implied the firm belief in the reality of the warrant deity; otherwise the oath would have been without any force: Gen 31:53 etc. As late texts one may call to mind: Ex 12:12 (P); Deut 4:19–20 together with Deut 29:25, 32:7–8; Pss 95:3, 97:9, 135:5 etc. Thus there is no indication of a line of demarcation between the period before and after the 6th century regarding the existence of

deities under the supremacy of Yhwh. As far as the biblical texts are concerned, we find the relationship between Yhwh and existing deities expressed by the concise creed-like formula of Ps 97:9 ("Yhwh high above all the earth, most exalted above all the gods"; the parallelism of the gods with the earth, which certainly exists, makes it clear that the gods exist too), from the most ancient texts throughout until the 4th or 3rd centuries. This picture suggested by the Bible is not different from the epigraphic data of theophoric personal names (Tigay). Thus it seems that on this point the Israelite conception of monotheism essentially remained the same from the beginnings until the end of the composition of the Hebrew Bible.

Second observation

Monolatry is not sufficient a category if one wants to describe the relationship between other deities and Yhwh. For in the case of ancient Israel, as mirrored in the biblical texts, monolatry *presupposes* the sovereign power of Yhwh, not only to forbid Israel to adore other deities, but also to forbid any claim of other deities to be worshiped by Israel. This is particularly clear in Ps 138:1–2 in comparison with Exod 20:3—according to the Psalm the Israelite worshiper of Yhwh has the right to sing *in the presence* of the other gods in praise of Yhwh (the Israelite worshiper must not fear these gods because he excludes them from his worship) while, according to the first word of the Decalogue, Exod 20:3=Deut 5:7, this worshiper has no right to worship other deities *in the presence* of Yhwh. This means that Israel may be monolatrous on earth because in heaven Yhwh is *sovereign with regard to the other deities*. This is the condition for monolatry in the Bible. Yhwh excludes the other gods from being worshiped by Israel in the same way as he excludes Israel from worshipping the other gods. These are the two sides of the same coin. In other words, in ancient Israel, monolatry *includes monotheism* as supremacy of Yhwh on deities inferior to him.

Third observation

Second Isaiah has the same idea of Yhwh as the supreme or transcendent deity in comparison with existing minor gods. This clearly results from Isa 41:21–24. This is the first judgment "in court" between Yhwh and other gods: Yhwh invites them to prove that they are able to foresee the future and thus to prove that they are gods (namely the gods of the other nations, especially the gods of Babylon, famous for their ruling of the times and of the future). V. 23 makes it clear that these rivals of Yhwh in fact are the other gods: "that we may know that you are gods". However, they can't furnish the proofs that they had foreseen the future and thus governed the

future events (most probably allusion to the rise of King Cyrus). Conclusion in v. 24: "you are nothing" (or, perhaps, "less than nothing"). Here it becomes clear that "nothing," in the language of Second Isaiah, may mean "as much as nothing," a being "next to nothing," but nevertheless a being which exists! Only a real being can be addressed as "you are nothing". If this were not so, the whole procedure in court, where Yhwh alone is able to prove that he has announced the rise of Cyrus while the other side was unable to do so, a procedure so important for Second Isaiah that he repeats it several times, would be a mere imagination without reality, a *vue de l'esprit*: if—what however is not the case—the gods existed, then they would be incapable of proving anything with regard to forseeing the future. It is obvious that such an interpretation would destroy the whole thrust of this repeated proof of Yhwh's exclusive position which Second Isaiah emphatically wants to establish. Therefore, Second Isaiah is far from proclaiming an absolute monotheism excluding the existence of other divine beings, as far as Deut in 4:35 (because of 4:19 which must be read together with v. 35). Yhwh's exclusive rank on the contrary presupposes the existence of other deities subordinated to him.

Fourth observation

Another point concerns the *image* of the deities of the nations other than Israel. It seems that there are two explanations in the Bible: the one, occurring in Second Isaiah, Psalms and elsewhere, claims the full incapacity of these representations of the gods to produce any real positive effect. They are but materials, shaped by men into a form, without any divine power. In Deut 4:15-19 there is, however, another explanation, more thoughtful and closer to the iconic theology of ancient Near East religions. According to this biblical "theology" of divine representations, as far as Yhwh is concerned, it is impossible to represent him because he has not shown his form at Sinai. There is no portrayal possible where the artist does not *see* the being he wants to represent. On the contrary, the other gods of the neighboring nations of Israel have a form because they appear as stars in the heavenly vault where they move. Therefore, they have a form which can be reproduced. This explanation, however, is more implicit than explicit in Deut 4:15–19, but, perhaps, nevertheless open to be made explicit.

I am ignorant whether some of these observations were already made by Yehezkel Kaufman or by Benjamin Sommer. In this case it will honor me to agree with such great authorities. In the other case I hope these sketches may be a modest contribution to the ongoing debate on monotheism in the Bible and in ancient Israel, so brilliantly led by Yehezkel Kaufmann and Benjamin Sommer.

Response to Benjamin Sommer's "Yehezkel Kaufmann and Recent Scholarship on Monotheism"

Othmar KEEL

Most of the elements of the position presented here are developed and argued at length in my two-volume work *Die Geschichte Jerusalems und die Entstehung des Monotheismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007). A very short version of this extensive publication (1384 pages, 725 illustrations) was edited by Brent Strawn and published by Fortress Press, Minneapolis, in July 2017 under the title "Jerusalem and the one God".

1. Two Preliminary Remarks

Remark 1: Sommer follows Kaufmann and others in distinguishing different kinds of monotheism, such as qualitative vs. quantitative monotheism—a distinction which I can generally agree. I propose, however, to distinguish also exclusive and inclusive or cumulative monotheism, a distinction which, in my view, is crucial for understanding YHWHism in a satisfactory way. A prominent example of exclusive monotheism is Echnaton's (Achenyati's) Aton-Monotheism. Only Aton is God, all other deities are irrelevant and insubstantial. On the other hand, YHWHism is at least at its beginnings a highly inclusive monotheism. Consider, for example, the deluge story in Genesis, whose Mesopotamian parallels are many centuries older than the biblical ones. In Mesopotamian deluge stories different deities are involved, including Enlil, Adad, Enki/Ea, and a female deity—each deity assuming a distinct role. In the Israelite versions YHWH plays all the parts. The result is a not very coherent figure, but a rich figure. In contrast, that is not the case with Aton-Monotheism. For example, Aton does not respond in a satisfactory way to many aspects of life, such as the problem of death and afterlife which is considered to be highly important in Egypt. Therefore, the Egyptians went back to Osiris and the other deities important for the afterlife. Thanks to a cumulative monotheism, YHWH answered an increasingly wide spectrum of needs. Only later, under the influence of Assyrian loyalty oaths, does YHWH come to assume features of an intolerant, violent, exclusive monotheistic deity. This kind of deity remains a god of a particular people of Judah, and is not the deity of all other peoples and nations. I shall address the relation between this particularistic and a fully developed "ripe" monotheism in section 3 below.

Remark 2: Kaufmann and Sommer combine the word historicism regularly with "shallow". Just the word "historicism" is already pejorative. "Historiography," however, is anything except "shallow." It tries to describe how reality became what it is. Whatever happens in our universe—be it natural-biological or human—it is related to time and space. Even the everlasting mountains have their history. They are far from being "everlasting." History is, like any kind of reality, immensely complex. Good history writing is based on material, so-called sources and their interpretation by an interpreter conscious of his/hers subjective position. The source-material of the second half of the second and the first two thirds of the first millennium for Palestine are in comparison to other historical periods extremely scarce. Most of it is lost. The six Amarna-Tablets from Jerusalem survived by chance and were found by chance. The scribe of Abdikhepa produced probably hundreds of texts and not just six letters. The same is true of all the other "sources." The consequence should be that good history writing dealing with periods characterized by such a scarcity of "sources" has to take into account as many as possible of the available "sources," including, of course, textual sources, such as biblical, extra-biblical, epigraphic, iconographic, and archaeological, as Ziony Zevit has done in his major and meticulous work *The Religions of Ancient Israel* (2001).

2. Outlines of a History of YHWHism

I agree with my colleagues Adrian Schenker and Benjamin Sommer that the YHWH-monotheism is (finally) a qualitative monotheism whose view of god is characterized by his independence of matter and destiny, a monotheism of transcendental sovereignty. In contrast to Kaufmann and his conscious or unconscious followers I think that YHWH ascended gradually to this position.

2.1. YHWH as a Proper Name

YHWH was not right from the beginning this type of a transcendental monotheistic god. This contention is based mainly on the fact that YHWH is a proper name. A monotheistic god is the only one of its kind. There is no need to have a proper name to be a "person." Mohammed's Allah is clearly conceived as a "person," but has just a generic name. "There is no other god than God." In a polytheistic world a proper name is indispensable. In the story of the burning bush YHWH appears to Moses and gives him the order to bring his people out of Egypt. Moses says: "If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' they will ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God's answer is a double one: First he says: "God said to Moses, 'I am who

I am.' He said further, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I am' has sent me to you'" (Exod 3:14). The second answer is: "God also said to Moses, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'YHWH' the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you': This is my name forever, and this my title for all generations" (Exod 3:15).

The interpretation as "I am who I am" in the first answer is highly sophisticated. It does not render the original meaning of the name as we will see. At the origin YHWH was a god similar to Kemosh, the god of the Moabites, together with whom he appears in the Mesha-Stela Inscription and in Judg 11:24.

Once YHWH had become a true monotheistic deity, the proper name YHWH became obsolete. A deity who is the only one of his kind can be called by a generic name, such as *Elohim*. Gen 1:1: "In the beginning when God (*Elohim*) created the heavens and the earth..." The generic designation *Elohim* is here in a monotheistic context used as a kind of proper name. That supposes a unique and only god as the designation *ho ouranos* used for the god of Israel in the Books of the Maccabees or *adonay* or *kyrios* respectively in the Septuagint. Jewish texts of the period when YHWH had ascended to the position of a unique and only god avoid more and more the proper name.

2.2. Why and How YHWH Ascended to the Status of a Transcendental Only God

There is not one clear reason why YHWH in contrast to Kemosh and similar national deities ascended to a transcendental status. But there are elements that, up to a certain point, render plausible and understandable why and how this happened to YHWH and not to Kemosh.

MOTIF/REASON 1: YHWH came from far away, from a region foreign and alien to Palestine and this fact survived in the collective memory of Israel.

We have quite a number of "sources" and arguments confirming this assumption.

- Argument 1.1: The complete name of the deity YHWH does not occur in pre-Israelite Levantine texts, neither in the Amarna tablets, nor in the texts from Ugarit, nor in the toponyms of pre-Israelite Palestine.
- Argument 1.2: A list of toponyms from Soleb from the time of Amenophis III (1390–1353 BC), quoted in two temples of Ramses II (1279–1213 BC) in Amara West and Aksha, however, mention *ta-shasu yahw*, "The land of the Shasu of Jahu". Yahu is probably the name of a deity identical with YHWH. The *shasu* were a tribe in

Northwestern Saudi Arabia, modern Hijaz, the biblical Midian. They were pushing north to biblical Seïr/Edom. The "*shasu* of Yahu" were probably a group of *shasu* worshipping the god Yahu.

- Argument 1.3: According to Deut 33:2 YHWH comes from Sinai, from Seïr, from Har Paran; according to Judg 5:4 from Seïr and Edom; Hab 3:3 and 7 enumerate Teman (South), Har Paran, Kushan and Midian. YHWH from Teman is mentioned already at the beginning of the 8th century BC in the Kuntillet Ajrud inscriptions.
- Argument 1.4: In the light of the later Judean animosity against the Midianites, e.g., in Numbers 31, it is highly surprising that Exodus 18 presents the father-in-law of Moses as a Midianite priest and teacher of Moses.
- Argument 1.5: The biblical descriptions of YHWH's theophanies include many volcanic elements. The "pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night" in Exod 13:21 is one of these. Another one is the fire and smoke of a kiln (*tannur*) in Exod 19:18; another one "mountains melting like wax before YHWH" (Ps 97:5). Phenomena like these are never found in descriptions of theophanies in Egypt, Ugarit or Mesopotamia. The only region in the Near East with volcanoes still active in biblical times is the Hijaz.
- Argument 1.6: A sixth and last argument is the proper name YHWH, which is most probably a preformative 3rd person masculine form. According to E. A. Knauf, divine names of this type are found only in preislamic Arabia. The etymology is probably from *hawah* "to blow, wave (of the wind)".

MOTIF/REASON 2: In the oldest traditions in Judges and the Books of Samuel, YHWH is a god of war and tempest, not of fertility, similar to the Egypto-Canaanite Baal-Seth or the Moabite Kemosh. The including and cumulative tendency of YHWHism led apparently early to a deity not related only to one single natural or cultural phenomenon but to several ones. Thus the deity related to them has to be above and independent of them. A god who is responsible for the manifestations of the sun and at the same time of clouds and tempests cannot anymore be very close to the one or to the other of these phenomena. The more parts he assumes, the less he can be close or let alone be identified with the one or the other. He gets a status of sovereignty and transcendence. There are again quite a number of "sources" and arguments confirming the hypothesis of accumulation of several parts.

- Argument 2.1: There are several cultic representations of YHWH. The oldest one known of seems to be the "ark of YHWH" brought by Abiathar, David's priest, from the south to Jerusalem (1 Kgs 1:26). There, YHWH was apparently identified with El.

- Argument 2.2: In the Jerusalem temple stood a second cultic symbol, an empty throne, typical of sun deities. Beside the priest Abiathar who came with David to Jerusalem, David "inherited" in Jerusalem a second priest, Zadok (2 Sam 8:17 and 20:25). The most probable interpretation is that Zadok was a priest of the sun-god whose sanctuary with the empty throne as divine symbol YHWH shared, represented by the ark. The Solomonic temple was oriented to the East, the raising sun. The empty throne was later appropriated by YHWH. So was a story originally told of Shemesh as main actor, the Sodom story. The two messengers of the sun-god are Zedeq and Mishpat, the steady attendants of the sun-god as a judge. They are not able to spend one single night (*lîn*; cf. Gen 19:2 and Isa 1:21 and 26) unharmed in the city. This is the reason why Shemesh-YHWH destroys the city when he rises in the morning.
- Argument 2.3: In the sanctuary in Bet-El established by Jeroboam I, YHWH is represented by the image of a bull. The bull is in this case not a symbol of fertility but of aggressiveness. It represents the YHWH who brought Israel out of Egypt (1 Kgs 12:28; cf. Num 23:22; 24:8). The story of the "Golden Calf" in Exodus 32 is at its origin probably the Hieros Logos of the Jeroboam sanctuary in Bet-El, later transformed in Judah into a polemical story.
- Argument 2.4: Only in the time of Hosea, in the second half of the 8th century BC, did YHWH take over the part of a weather and fertility god from Baal. In Hosea 2:8 YHWH complains: "She [Israel as a woman] did not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the wine and the oil."
- Argument 2.5: Not only in the story of the Deluge does YHWH inherit the part of a female deity. The *ʿaštĕrōt haṣṣōʾn* are as the name says originally a blessing granted by Astarte (cf. the Latin *veneres gregis*). In Deut 7:13; 28:4, 18, and 51, they are mentioned as a blessing of YHWH.
- Argument 2.6: In the 7th century BC under Assyro-Aramean influence, the cult of the moon god of Harran became very important in the Levant. In the vision of Zechariah 4, the lampstand between two trees, a symbol of the moon god of Harran, is used in its new context to make visible YHWH's promise of a new beginning with his people.

MOTIF/REASON 3: Besides the foreign origin of YHWH and the enigmatic and long lasting process of YHWH taking over parts of more and more deities, there seems to be as a third motif/reason: a single event and its interpretation, actually its misinterpretation, which is at the origin of statements in the Hebrew Bible that can definitively be considered as monotheistic in a strict sense.

- Argument 3.1: This event was the attack and the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrians under Sennacherib which failed to conquer the city. Different biblical and Assyrian texts agree on that fact. Normally, the Assyrians pushed to the end and didn't stop their attacks before they had punished "the rebel." The fact that Sennacherib did not follow this policy in the case of Hezekiah and Jerusalem can be explained by different historical circumstances. For the prophet Isaiah, the destruction of all Judean cities except Jerusalem was a catastrophe. One hundred years later a completely different view was predominant. A cluster of stories transmitted twice in the Hebrew Bible (2 Kgs 18:17–19:37 and Isa 36:1–37:38) maintains that the event was a great victory and that it was a miracle and exclusively the consequence of an intervention of YHWH or his angel. Many other and more important cities were not saved by their protector-deities, because according to the story, they were not real deities at all. YHWH alone is god and has demonstrated this unique status through this event, which is described with what probably is the oldest strictly monotheistic formulae (Isa 37:16; 2 Kgs 19:19). The stories were told at the time when the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar threatened the city. There was a lively debate between two factions. The one argued for military opposition advocating the Sennacherib and the David and Goliath stories to support their view.
  The main representatives of the other party were the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel who pushed to submit. The political leaders followed the advice of prophets such as Hananiah (Jeremiah 28) recommended military action. They were convinced of YHWH's intervention in favor of Jerusalem as at the time of Sennacherib and Hezekiah. After the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple of YHWH by Nebuchadnezzar, Hananiah and his colleagues were considered pseudo-prophets and Jeremiah and Ezekiel as true and reliable prophets. The monotheistic Credo, however, of the "pseudo-prophets" survived, although their argument was no more valid. Usually the so-called Deutero-Isaiah is considered the first representative of a clearly articulated not just a latent monotheism. Deutero-Isaiah takes up the monotheistic formulation of the Sennacherib stories, but without the unambiguous argument the latter had to present. After the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple their argument was no longer valid.
- Argument 3.2: Deutero-Isaiah combines the monotheistic formula of the Sennacherib/Hezekiah stories with latent but fully developed monotheism. According to this view the one God is in charge of all peoples and nations not just of Israel or Judah respectively. This view may have been favored by the topographical/geographical situation of Jerusalem, which rendered possible the encounter with

> many cultures and nations, being however less vulnerable than Gaza, which had the disadvantage to be right on the main road between Egypt and the Levant and Mesopotamia and so exposed to the devastating attacks of different armies. An observation point a certain distance away in the mountains, such as Jerusalem, favored the view that one single deity governed the movements of the different peoples and nations. Already for Isaiah, Assyria is an instrument in the hands of YHWH (Isa 7:20; 10:5). For Jeremiah, Nebuchadnezzar is a servant of YHWH (Jer 27:6; 43:10), and for Deutero-Isaiah, the Persian king Cyrus is even his anointed (Messiah; Isa 45:1), a view absolutely unthinkable for Deuteronomic/Deuteronomistic theologians with their one God only in charge of Israel.

Despite the different reasons, motifs, and arguments that can be listed in favor of a certain historical development as, for example, the fact that the history of European philosophy starts in the Ionian cities of Asia Minor, there always remains in history an element of arbitrariness due to the multiplicity of influences and their multiple possibilities of interactions.

Biblical Research in Hebrew

A Discussion of its Character and Trends*

Menahem HARAN

Lecture delivered November 5, 1968 at the Inauguration of the Yehezkel Kaufmann Chair of Bible Studies

Author's Note: This lecture, delivered at the inauguration of the Yehezkel Kaufmann Chair of Bible Studies at the Hebrew University, is brought here essentially without changes, as it was presented at the ceremony, except for its English translation. The two last sections, however, which were not presented at that time (they were published subsequently in *Ha-'ûniversitah*, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 10–12), are added here, since they constitute a direct continuation of the lecture. Certain aspects of the subject discussed here were treated by me in a more elaborate and detailed form on several occasions, in various Hebrew periodicals (*Bitzaron*, the Hebrew monthly of America, *Mo'znaim*, the monthly of the Hebrew Writers Association in Israel, the bi-monthly *Molad*, as well as *Ha-'ûniversitah*, a periodical of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem).

I wish to express my gratitude to Mrs. Batya Rabin for her help in casting my thoughts into an English mold and formulating this version.

M. H.

1

Biblical exegesis began as early as the end of the biblical period itself; at any rate, it has been in existence continuously ever since the biblical canon was concluded unto the present. Until the Renaissance in Europe, biblical exegesis (that is, of that part of the Bible dealing with the Mosaic dispensation) was actually confined to Jews. Christian scholars were, on the whole, strangers to the meaning and letters of the Hebrew language and could approach it only with the assistance of Jewish scholars or Jews converted to Christianity. It is doubtful whether after St. Jerome, throughout the entire Middle Ages, Christianity produced even as many as three scholars with a

* Editor's note: This essay has been edited for correction of errors and stylistic uniformity.

real knowledge of Hebrew.[1] As against this, Jewish biblical exegesis, which had direct access to the Hebrew original and for the greater part was even written in Hebrew, attained some achievements which did not lose in importance throughout the generations. The brilliant intuition, fine sensitivity, and ability to listen to the tone of the text that characterized the great medieval Hebrew biblical exegetes frequently raised their work to an exceedingly high level and turned it into a model of this kind. Their work is still highly significant today.

However, following the Renaissance and particularly from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, upon the awakening of sciences and the humanistic scholarship in Europe, a new subject was born—a subject which no longer contents itself with biblical exegesis, but endeavors to study the Bible by employing methods of philological and historical criticism. The aims and means of critical research differ completely from the classical exegesis. Critical research is not satisfied with a literal and grammatical understanding of the text as it stands. It also seeks to answer the fundamental question of how the books of the Bible came into being—when, where, under which historical circumstances and conditions of creativity; if possible it even tries to arrive at the identity of the author (in any event it examines the authenticity of the text) and the definition of the literary and typological nature of the work in question. The implements of the critical research are literary and form analysis, historical investigation, as well as a study of the text itself. It presumes that there is a considerable distance, even a certain tension, between the utterances and words as committed to writing by the biblical authors and the books of the Bible as we possess them today. One might say that criticism always seeks to introduce the historical factor into the text and to illuminate it from a historical angle—when it determines how and when the works were composed, or how they became joined together in more composite units, or how and to what extent the text has been preserved or modified in the course of time.

The appearance of biblical critical research constituted somewhat of a sensational innovation, which had no place in the concepts or the imagination of the early exegetes. The problems of this research did not, in fact, concern the exegetes, whereas the methods designed to solve the problems were completely foreign to them. The arguments of Porphyrius or the skeptical reflections of Clemens of Alexandria in the period preceding the Middle Ages (both of whom were of the third century B.C.E.), do not detract from the decisiveness of the turning point which came about with the appearance of systematic criticism, but only serve to emphasize it. On the other hand, Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra's casual and ambiguous allusions

[1] The one who stands out among these few is Nicolaus de Lyra, who in his biblical interpretations drew on Rashi and occasionally even translated him word by word. His interpretations were studied by Luther and thus he constituted one of the concealed connecting links between the Middle Ages and the Reformation.

cannot blur the general, traditional character of the medieval biblical exegesis. Any attempt at pushing back the date of Hebrew biblical criticism and finding early signs of it in Talmudic literature or in the works of medieval scholars, puts the cart before the horse and obscures the border line between historical periods.

2

Today, after some two hundred years of activity, biblical criticism has already become an old established and somewhat complicated subject. It is older than quite a few subjects in the humanities and social sciences. However, its entrance into the Hebrew language actually began only some sixty years ago.* Moreover, its acceptance by Jewish scholars, including those who did not write in Hebrew, was no easy matter. It involved inhibitions, revulsion, an absence of continuity, and lack of significance; and it sometimes appears as though the acceptance of this subject is found hard for them even to the present day. There were, of course, a number of exceptions. One of these was Leopold Zunz who, in addition to his observations on the Book of Chronicles, within the framework of his monumental history of Jewish homiletics (*Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden, historisch entwickelt*, Berlin 1832; Second edition, Frankfurt a.M. 1892), occupied himself in his old age with the study of the Pentateuch and devoted much attention to de Wette's work on Deuteronomy.[2] Then there was Abraham Geiger who, in addition to his great work on the Bible and its translations (*Urschrift und Übersetzungen der Bibel in ihrer Abhängigkeit von der innern Entwicklung des Judentums*, Breslau 1857; Second edition, Frankfurt a.M. 1928), in his lectures at the *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Berlin, gave an introduction to the Bible in which he touched upon various aspects of biblical criticism.[3] Heinrich Graetz published studies and commentaries on several of the books of the Prophets and the Hagiographa, in which he adhered to an extremely critical system (without, however, touching the Pentateuch).[4] S. Maybaum, D. Hoffmann,

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* I.e., the turn of the nineteenth century into the twentieth [editor's note].

2 See L. Zunz, "Bibelkritisches," *Gesammelte Schriften*, I, Berlin 1875, pp. 217–70.

3 A. Geiger, "Einleitung in die biblischen Schriften," *Nachgelassene Schriften*, IV, Berlin 1876, pp. 1–279.

4 Besides his articles on various biblical subjects which appeared in *MGWJ* between the years 1871–1887, a mention may be made of his commentaries on Ecclesiastes (Leipzig 1871), Song of Songs (Wien 1871), and Psalms (in two parts, Breslau 1882–1883), his work on Joel (published in *Jahresbericht des jüdisch-theologischen Seminars*, Breslau 1873), and the posthumous publication *Emendationes in prelosque Sacrae Scripturae Veteris Testamenti libros* (ed. W. Bacher; Breslau 1892–1894).

and I. Rabin wrote monographs on specific problems of biblical research,[5] while B. Jacob wrote his detailed commentary on the Book of Genesis in which he sought to contest the concepts of criticism.[6] Yet, these works were not sufficient to alter the picture, all the more so since a considerable part of even this modest output was not created for the purpose of setting out and conquering new horizons, but rather because of defensive impulses aimed at halting the wave that was storming in from outside.

Such was the attitude of Jewish scholars who wrote in the German language; even more so did this attitude hold within the limits of the Hebrew language, where the harvest was poor indeed. Explanations and emendations of the biblical text were present in the works of such scholars as Joshua Heshel Schorr (in the periodical *He-ḥalutz*), Abraham hen Nachman Krochmal (in his book *Ha-ketav ve-ha-mikhtav* [Lemberg] 1873, which includes a German translation of the Pentateuch) and Elimelech (Wechsler) Ish-Noami (in his brochures *ʿEṭ sheqer sopherim* [Drohovicz 1905] and particularly *Hago Sigim* [Drohovicz 1909]). But such concerns were marginal in their work and look like incidental labors which, for some reason, they did not see themselves free to desist from. Tiny and incidental glimmers of significant thought are lost among mountains of verbosity in the publica-tions of that time. The same applies to studies with a direct or indirect bearing on the Bible, written by scholars of the type of Jacob Reifmann. The latter actually was a Talmudist and a scholarly *maskil* (enlightened person), whom biblical subjects engaged mainly through his occupation with Talmudic material. This type too represented a special form of quasi-biblical scholarship among Eastern and Central European Jews, that is to say, scholars who were mainly concerned with, and worked in Talmudic literature, dealing incidentally in their own way also with biblical problems inasmuch as the Bible was reflected to them in a Talmudic mirror (Jewish Enlightenment in those parts of Europe appears to have momentarily forgotten one of Mendelssohn's principles). The most outstanding scholar of this type of Talmudic-

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[5] S. Maybaum, *Die Entwicklung des altisraelitischen Priestertums*, Breslau 1880; D. Hoffmann, *Die wichtigsten Instanzen gegen die Graf-Wellhausensche Hypothese*, Berlin 1903 (a mention may also be made of his series of articles "Probleme der Pentateuchexegese" dealing with the Book of Exodus; in *Jeschurun* [monthly], vols. 1–6, 1914–1919); I. Rabin, "Studien zur vormosaischen Gottesvorstellung," *Festschrift zum 75-jährigen Bestehen des jüdisch-theologischen Seminars*, I, Breslau 1929, pp. 257–356.

[6] B. Jacob, *Das erste Buch der Torah: Genesis*, Berlin 1934. He is also the author of some other studies relating to the Bible. His commentary on Exodus, molded in the same form as the one on Genesis, has been preserved in a manuscript (copied by University microfilms, Ann Arbor). [Both of these are now available in English translation: Benno Jacob, *The First Book of the Bible: Genesis*, abridged and translated by Ernest Jacob and Walter Jacob (New York: Ktav, 1974); and Benno Jacob, *The Second Book of the Bible: Exodus* (abridged and translated by Walter Jacob and Yaakov Elman; Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1992).—Editors.]

biblical learning was R. Meir Ish-Shalom (Friedmann), the prominent scholar of midrashic literature who wrote a number of studies on biblical subjects, including not a little apologetic argumentation in a hearty style, while all his discussions are exclusively based on Talmudic literature, considering any non-Jewish work on the Bible to be completely beyond the pale. On the other hand, a scholar as distinguished as Nachman Krochmal, the author of *Moreh nevukhe ha-zeman* (The Guide for the Perplexed of Our Time, first edition, edited by L. Zunz [Lemberg 1851]), who built up his work on philological bases and absorbed in it a number of critical concepts bearing upon the Bible, did not, of course, become thereby an active associate in the field of biblical criticism. At the most, he was passively connected with this subject, some of whose principles served to underpin his Hegelian thinking.

The path found to be most suitable for Jewish scholars to pursue was the one of exegesis. Here they were able to fasten on to a long chain of builders and innovators as well as to a tradition of masterpieces, which has been stamped even with a style of its own. A few prominent workers in this field appeared, in fact, also in and after the period of Enlightenment. But then, the imprints of critical research, even after it had gained in strength and become a real branch of study, were few and slight in the works of these biblical exegetes. Samuel David Luzzatto, Arnold B. Ehrlich (the author of *Miqra' Kipheshuto*, Berlin 1899–1901, and *Randglossen zur hebräischen Bibel*, Leipzig 1908–1914), let alone Moses Mendelssohn (the promoter and editor of the Hebrew *Bi'ur* with a German translation of the Torah) were nothing but exegetes and in this respect the medieval heritage was active in their works. Criticism was not their forte) though its echoes can be heard in their writings, and were we to evaluate them according to their critical qualities, their stature would sadly diminish. The same applies to the commentaries of R. Benjamin Szold (the author of a Hebrew commentary on Job, Baltimore 1886) and R. Meir Ish Shalom who, in addition to his abovementioned studies, wrote commentaries and notes to several books or chapters of the Prophets and the Hagiographa. These scholars consciously ignored criticism, its methods, and its principles, yet, at the same time their works make certain contributions in the sphere of exegesis.

3

There are some reasons for the recoil of Jewish scholars from biblical criticism and for the historical delay in the meeting between this subject and the Hebrew language.

In the first place, the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* directed its efforts to the study of Talmudic and rabbinical Judaism, for the declared purpose of

turning this field into an academic discipline. Against the circumstances prevailing at that time, there existed obvious motives which drove Jewish scholars to the study of post-biblical and medieval Judaism only. In Western Europe, the Jewish community was in the process of emerging from the ghetto, beginning to fit itself into the frameworks of a democratic state. It was only natural that the intellectual *élite* of this community, which had already begun to sense modern culture, should aspire to turn its Jewish heritage into a subject for research according to critical methods. Zunz desired to raise this subject to a branch of humanities, and all his lifetime he sought to obtain a foothold for it in German universities. However, as far as the Bible was concerned, the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* had no ambitions whatsoever. In any case the Bible constituted one of the foundation stones of Christian civilization and its study, being already accepted and recognized in the academic establishment, did not need the approval of Jewish scholars. In his program, Zunz actually excluded the Bible from the subjects with which the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* was to deal in the future. Those scholars who published their studies in Hebrew and participated in the building up of the Hebrew Enlightenment literature in Western and Central Europe (such as S. J. Rappaport, Nachman Krochmal, and S. D. Luzzatto), were also among the builders of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and had no reason to change its orientation. In Eastern Europe, the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* followed in the footsteps of its western counterpart, sharing with it the same motives and tendencies. During the period of Enlightenment, scholarship there did not, for the most part, come up to the standards of the west, while the occupation with biblical matters was still less successful and frequently showed signs of ineffectuality.

Another, perhaps still more compelling reason which delayed the acceptance of biblical criticism by Jews in general and by the Hebrew language in particular, is connected with the special theological significance possessed by the Bible in Judaism. The *Wissenschaft des Judentums* used the scalpel of criticism on the post-biblical strata of Judaism, thereby turning them into a function of evolution and historical situations and shaking their dogmatic authority. It did not, however, dare to touch the Bible itself, or at least the Torah (characteristic is the fact that even Graetz who demonstrated a fairly critical approach to the books of the Prophets and the Hagiographa, refrained from touching the Pentateuch). Even for the most extreme Enlightened (*maskilim*) who did not hesitate to carry out pretty wild emendations in the biblical text, the Bible still served as a last bastion of pure faith, as a kind of fundamental principle of Jewish religion, which was not to be shaken. To quote the words of one of them (modeled after the saying of Paul), which turned into a slogan in the writings of the Enlightened: "Verily, the letters and the words are like corpses and only the spirit, the spirit of God that hovereth over the face of the Holy Writings, is that which preserves the nation alive and sets it up as a banner of the peoples,

etc."[7] This apprehension did not help Jewish scholars to wrestle freely with the incisive problems of biblical criticism. Protestant Christianity, which was born in the tremendous crises of the Reformation and consolidated a new theology for itself, was prepared to stand up to these problems and to absorb their sting. Judaism was apparently not yet in this position.

However, with the awakening of the national consciousness among the Jewish community in Eastern Europe, Judaism began to be perceived in new categories—that is, as national, historical, "secular" entity. Henceforth the Bible was depicted mostly as a great monument of a mere national culture, as the most outstanding creation of the Jewish people during the period when it lived a full national life, before it was uprooted from its land. The national metamorphosis in the consciousness of East European Jewry took place only near the end of the nineteenth century, and it was this which gave the final legitimization for the absorption of biblical criticism in the Hebrew language.

4

The literary enchanter who gave a publicistic and theoretical expression to the national awakening of East European Jewry and whose forceful imprint was stamped on all the discussions of his contemporaries as well as of the following generation, was Aḥad Ha-ʿAm (Asher Ginzberg). His national theory is partly founded on the basic assumption of Bible research as conceived and formulated at the turn of the century. At the same time, his theory designs to link up the various manifestations of Judaism throughout the generations. Aḥad Ha-ʿAm talks of "the will for national survival," which operates in the existence of a national group and is comprehended by him as instinctive and unconscious in nature. He further speaks of "the national spirit" which is embodied in different historical forms, all the national manifestations becoming its external expressions and "raiments." In this way he unites biblical and post-biblical Judaism as parallel representations of the same national spirit and abolishes the partition which Christian theology had put up between the two (occasionally also Western Jewish scholarship, even though unintentionally, tended to admit the existence of such a partition). Moreover, in Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's thinking the biblical period turns into the ideal one in Jewish history, a period which had given full and explicit expression to the national spirit of this group. The "raiments" of Israel's national spirit in that period had not as yet become circumscribed and curtailed as they were destined to become in the diaspora. The highlight of that period and the essence of Israel's spirit in all times was, according to Aḥad

[7] J. H. Schorr, *He-ḥalutz*, I, 1852, p. 98.

Ha-ʿAm, prophecy, in which he saw the purpose of the Jewish existence also for the future.

It will not, therefore, surprise us to find Aḥad Ha-ʿAm demanding that all that is good and substantial in non Jewish Bible scholarship be accepted into the Hebrew language. He denounces the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* for immersing itself "in diaspora darkness, in ghetto ruins" and protests that the study of the ancient, original period, in which the spirit of our people was created and evolved in its own unique way and where the right key for solving all 'the problems and difficulties' is preserved" has been handed over to strangers.[8] He reminds his readers that in this field important contributions are being made in the European languages, "through tremendous diligence which testifies to a great and deep love," and as an example he mentions the *Handkommentar zum Alten Testament* which was being published at that time in Göttingen under the editorship of W. Nowack. In this connection he maintains that "A perfect understanding of Scripture ought to occupy the first place among the most important aims of work on modern (Hebrew) literature," since "the root of our national spirit" is concealed there.[9]

And yet, for all the inherent paradox, it was Aḥad Ha-ʿAm who sought also to forestall the acceptance of biblical criticism by the Hebrew language. There was a certain ambivalence in his attitude to this subject—with one hand he reached out for it while with the other he pushed it away. In his essay on Moses he differentiated between archeological truth, to which he did not attribute much importance, and historical-psychological truth that embodies the nation's spirit and on which it exerts a hypnotic influence.[10] In his remarks on the program of Bible studies at the Herzliah High School in its early years, he came out with explicit anti-philological pronouncements: "The text as we now have it before us . . . that is our national Bible, just as if that is how it was primarily created; we have no wish whatsoever to know the original text as it issued from the lips of the prophet."[11]

Possibly, the reason for this ambivalent attitude is rooted deep down to the ground in Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's national ideology which, in the course of years, revealed an inner, dialectic development. Aḥad Ha-ʿAm the positivist, the disciple of A. Comte and H. Spencer, was pulled more and more towards idealism. He no longer comprehended the national spirit as an abstract sum total of the concrete historical manifestations of the national culture; rather, he conceived of it as a super-historical, metaphysical idea manifesting itself in different forms, but remaining constant and unchang-

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8 Aḥad Ha-ʿAm, *ʿAl parashat derakhim* (At the Crossroads—Collected Essays), Introduction to the first edition (1895).

9 Ibid., *Yalqut qatan* (Small Miscellany), sect. XXXI.

10 *Aḥad Ha'am's Collected Writings*, Fourth edition (in Hebrew; Tel Aviv: Dvir and Hotza'ah ʿIvrit), 1947, pp. 342–43.

11 Ibid., p. 419.

ing in its essence. As far as Israel is concerned, this was, according to Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's theory, the idea of absolute justice whose great exponents were the prophets. Thus, he sought to transform Judaism, a historical religion as it is, into a kind of new, secular but nonetheless positive, clear-cut and binding ideological reality. The new Judaism was to be distinguished from the old one, in Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's thought, only by the substitution of "I feel" for "I believe." Another possible reason for Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's recoil from biblical criticism may be connected with his practical disposition and the utilitarian contents of his teaching, which did not allow him to pay much heed to philological research for its own sake. He appreciated the kind of practical research appertaining to the public and "connected with the life of the present and the future"—not theoretical scholarship reserved for professionals.[12] One should still mention the considerate nature of Aḥad Ha-ʿAm the person and the great care he took not to hurt the feelings of readers by publishing things unpalatable to them. The result was that precisely *Ha-shiloaḥ*, the central Hebrew periodical of the time, which appeared under his editorship, was actually closed to articles connected with Bible research.

5

However, not even the authority of "The Master" (*Ha-moreh*—the epithet applied by his contemporaries to Aḥad Ha-ʿAm) could any longer prevent biblical research from entering the Hebrew language. Once the historical door was opened, there was no possibility of closing it any more. Plans started to take shape and projects began to be carried out, which pointed to some kind of change—though for the time being the output was rather scanty, as most of the projects failed from the start. In this connection we ought to mention the attempts made around the circle of Aḥad Ha-ʿAm himself by the Aḥiasaf publishers, later Dvir, at the beginning of the century and in the twenties. One of the earliest harbingers was the attempt of Ch. N. Bialik and A. I. Zalichenko to bring out a Hebrew translation of Wilhelm Nowack's work on Hebrew (i.e., biblical) archeology (Warsaw 1905). It was a characteristic wish that the translators expressed in the foreword to the slim brochure which they succeeded to publish: "We view this book . . . as opening a door in our literature to the subject of research into our antiquities and our sacred Scriptures, 'the heritage of the nations.'"[13] After that, in the twenties, Dvir published two issues of its quar-

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12 Ibid., p. 126 et al.

13 The quotation marks for the last words are applied in the original. This turn of phrase is reminiscent of the text in Jer. 3:19. The authors intended to pun upon the word *goyim*, which in biblical Hebrew means "nations, peoples," whereas in post-biblical Hebrew also implies "gentiles, non-Jews."

terly magazine of Jewish studies (Berlin 1923–24) and also tried to maintain a special series of Bible studies within whose framework appeared the highly useful and substantial book, bearing the title *Toledot biqqoret ha-miqra'* (The History of Biblical Criticism; Berlin 1925), the work of Menahem (Max) Soloweitchik (Solieli) and Zalman Rubasheff (Shazar, at present the President of the State of Israel).

Two other projects grew in the course of years and achieved serious dimensions and were almost completed. Both were connected with the national awakening that took place in East European Jewry at the beginning of the century.

One is the critical commentary to the Torah, Prophets and Hagiographa published under the editorship and with the participation of Abraham Kahana (Zhitomir-Tel Aviv 1904–1930). Kahana hoped to obtain the collaboration of Jewish scholars from all over Europe and to divide the Books to be worked on amongst them, without relinquishing his own share. But there were not many Jewish scholars whose training and inclination fitted them for this task (even today there are not many) and not all of those who consented to participate succeeded in carrying out their intention. A great deal of the missing material had to be supplied by Kahana himself who, in addition to planning and editing the project, also undertook the writing of the commentary of some dozen books, but even so the series was not completed. The series as a whole is not of an even quality, depending on the aptitude and ability of the contributors, yet it at least has a historical credit, since it was the first to confront the Hebrew reader with biblical criticism with its real problems and specific methods, without any intention to soften it by means of retouching and attaching to it a Jewish image. The approach of this commentary is completely critical and therein lies its strength and its mission. There is, indeed, no doubt that in its preparation Kahana was moved by a sense of mission which sprang from the deepest sources of the national awakening, and the strong urges which drove that generation prompted also this scholar with his learned work. Only in this way can one explain the daring, energy and perseverance that characterized him in this undertaking (as well as in other scholarly projects). Suffice it to say that to this day his commentary has remained the only one of its kind in Hebrew, and the critical commentaries written in Hebrew even on individual books of the Bible to this day are as yet very few in number, hardly totaling to half a dozen.

The second is Yehezkel Kaufmann's monumental undertaking in the field of biblical research, his voluminous *Toledot ha-emunah ha-yisre'elit* (History of the Israelite Faith, Tel Aviv 1937–1956) and the books connected with this work—the commentaries to Joshua (Jerusalem 1959) and Judges (Jerusalem 1962) with the monographs and articles which depend on them.

No one could be further removed from Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's thought and from the style that was characteristic of his school than Kaufmann. Nevertheless, in Kaufmann's great project in biblical research, most of the desires on which this school had set its heart were realized. First of all, he too closed the breach which Christian theology had made between biblical and post-biblical Judaism, conceiving of them both as an ideological and historical continuum—even though he comprehended this continuum quite differently from Aḥad Ha-ʿAm. He too saw in the Bible the purest embodiment of Judaism and in the prophecy the summit of Israel's spiritual world. His working method was critical, secular in character, based on absolute freedom of thought, as philological research can only be. At the same time, unlike Kahana's project, Kaufmann's work contained a strong element of creativity, innovation, and revolt. He fought a royal battle with gentile criticism which he sought to defeat with its own weapons. In that way too he gave an expression to the desires which thrilled the hearts of Jewish scholars of the generation of national awakening and scholars who gathered round the circle of Aḥad Ha-ʿAm in particular. They longed for research in the Bible to be not merely Hebrew in form, but also new and revolutionary in content. Even though they wished this research in its Hebrew garb to free itself from parochialism and narrow-mindedness, they did not want it to be a mere repetition of the achievements and the perceptions that the subject enjoyed in the European languages. They desired creative Bible research, which, as stated by one of them, on the one hand would shake off "the outworn ideas concerning the mission of Judaism" (i.e., as they were apprehended by the western liberal Jewry), while on the other hand would have the strength to stand up to the waves of truisms emanating from a foreign world."[14] One could possibly claim that the impulses of orthodox or liberal Judaism were exchanged by them for national impulses. They were not, at any rate, strong enough to realize these longings. Paradoxically enough, it was precisely Kaufmann, whose thoughts were diametrically opposed to Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's school, that set to realize those longings. Furthermore, in Kaufmann's system as well, Bible research becomes the cornerstone in explaining the essence of Judaism and in solving the mystery of Jewish survival. That is to say, it was precisely he that found in the Bible "the right key for solving all 'the problems and difficulties.'"

6

The national awakening in East European Jewry brought forth wonderful literary productions in the Hebrew language, while the Zionist movement,

[14] N. B. S. (= Naftali ben Shemuel), being a pseudonym for Y. N. Simḥoni, *Ha-tequfah* VIII, 1921, pp. 504, 508 (in a review on E. Auerbach's book *Die Prophetie*, Berlin 1920).

which erupted in different forms in Eastern and Western Europe brought about a decisive change in Jewish history, and after the efforts and struggle of three generations led to the establishment of the State. However, critical work in Hebrew, in Jewish Studies in general and in Bible studies in particular, lagged far behind the *belles-lettres*—at least until the end of the first third of the twentieth century. Hebrew periodicals specializing in Jewish Studies, which sprouted in Europe[15] were left out of breath and disappeared at rapid rate. At that time professional studies could find place mostly in general magazines, in which belletristic and popular articles stood side by side with scientific works of varying degrees of popularity. Moreover, Jewish scholars writing Hebrew, as far as their philological methods matured and their standards rose, desired to bring their results to other participants in the field, and consequently they were forced, even if against their will, to write in languages other than Hebrew. Such an inevitability is inherent in the nature of things, and whoever acknowledges the international character of critical, professional research, cannot avoid it even today. However, under the conditions prevailing at that time the Hebrew language was not as yet even able to absorb serious philological works in the fields of Judaica and Biblica, both on account of the limited scope and provincial character of its readers and because of the meagerness of literary and institutional tools. Scholars working on these subjects were compelled to forgo Hebrew altogether. It is typical that even M. J. Bin-Gorion (Berdyczewski), a distinguished writer and thinker in the Hebrew language, did not refrain from writing his critical Bible researches in German. In this manner Jewish scholars in the beginning of the twentieth century actually though inadvertently continued the line of demolition characteristic of the nineteenth-century *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Western Europe, whose inherent destructive tendencies have already become well recognized.

There was, of course, a difference between the scholars of the classical *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in its earlier phases and the nationally conscious scholars of the twentieth century who engaged in Jewish Studies. For the former, writing in a language other than Hebrew was a purposeful, intentional matter, whereas with the latter it was only natural and inescapable. On the latter, the non-Hebrew language was forced by objective circumstances and some of them even tried, within the limited possibilities, to free themselves of it. The most important factor influencing this language question of modern Jewish scholarship was indicated by the editors of the *Dvir* magazine when in the foreword they pointed out the limitation and dearth of the "reading public devoted to Hebrew (i.e., Jewish) scholarship in the Hebrew language."[16] One might add to this statement that under the

[15] Such as S. A. Horodezky's *Ha-goren, ha-tzofeh le-ḥokhmat yisra'el* of the Hungarian scholars, as well as *Dvir* which was connected with the state of mind in Aḥad Ha-ʿAm's circle and patronized by Bialik.

[16] *Dvir* I, 1923, p. V. The editors were I. M. Elbogen, Y. N. Epstein, and N. H. Torczyner.

conditions of the modern diaspora, after the fall of the ghetto walls, such a public is of necessity destined to remain severely limited in number. The modern diaspora has no room for a Hebrew community producing an intellectual *élite*, which engages professionally in humanistic studies, and that, for whatever reason, in the Hebrew language. In the present state of affairs, especially after the extermination of East European Jewry, the literary creativity in Hebrew outside of the Land of Israel has become a contradiction of the natural order of life and is therefore also short-rooted and powerless. The reading public which the editors of *Dvir* were looking for could only become a reality under the conditions of the Land of Israel.

In actual fact, it was the new life coming into being in this country in the Hebrew language, which really created this public. No wonder that Kahana's project was transferred to Palestine, while that of Kaufmann was from the very start carried out here.[17] The new conditions in the Land of Israel brought about the establishment of a Hebrew University—an act which clearly testified to the comprehensive nature and completeness of the Hebrew reality being built in this country still prior to the founding of the State. It was the Hebrew University which acted as a natural raising ground for an intellectual *élite* which is Hebrew in language and thought (while in recent years, with the sharp rise in educational needs and the "explosion" of institutions of higher learning in Israel, the Hebrew University's counterparts outside of Jerusalem were made partners in this task). On the other hand, from the very beginning the Hebrew University constituted a natural setting for research in Jewish Studies, and it opened the way for scholars in these fields to conduct their work or to carry it on in the Hebrew language. Within this framework, Bible research has become a part of Jewish Studies and was clothed in Hebrew, as was demonstrated already by the work of the first Bible teachers at the University: M. H. Segal and M. D. (U.) Cassuto, who were given the opportunity to engage in this subject in, or to transfer their activity to, the Hebrew language. The same can be said of the other teachers, such as M. Buber and N. H. Tur-Sinai (Torczyner), whose scholarly undertakings included also Bible studies. In this framework room was also found for Y. Kaufmann in the last decade of his life.

7

By now we have reached a stage in which we take the Hebrew dress of philological Bible research for granted. There is no longer any reason to be

[17] While M. J. Bin-Gorion's biblical studies appeared in Hebrew only a few years ago. These are: *Ḥayyey Mosheh* (Tel Aviv: Moreshet Mikhah Yosef, 1961); *Sinai u-gerizim*, 2 vols. (Tel Aviv: Moreshet Mikhah Yosef, 1962–63; *Yehudah ve-yisra'el* (Tel Aviv: Moreshet Mikhah Yosef, 1965. His German publication in this field is the posthumous volume *Sinai und Garizim*, Berlin: Morgenland-Verlag, 1926.

grateful to critical Bible studies only for their being published in the Hebrew language and we evaluate them on their own, inherent merit. Biblical research in Hebrew, which in the nature of things is today concentrated in the State of Israel, has already become fairly complex and variegated in content and trends. A quite considerable number of scholars devote themselves to it and some of these endeavor to select their own approach or to accentuate an individual method of work which is particularly close to their heart. Contact with the land, its scenery and concrete conditions are felt in several of the publications brought out in Israel, while the subjects of Palestinian archeology, topography, historical geography, and biblical realia—that have gained very much in importance in the last generation—are leaving their marks on biblical research carried out here.

For all that, we have not yet reached the point of having a common center of gravity or the emergence of characteristic features of the work being carried out in this subject in Israel—we are still a long way from being able to boast of a Jerusalem or Israeli school. Moreover, on occasion it appears that we do not even agree on the basic assumptions of philological research in this subject, and we sound as if we were speaking in different languages. Centuries of critical occupation with the Bible in Europe's institutions of higher learning sufficed to take the subject apart and subdivide it into many branches—but did not shake the agreement which existed in every generation (and which exists also today) as regards the fundamental concepts of biblical criticism; neither did it make it impossible for scholars, wherever they be, to communicate with each other on the specific problems of the subject. Even the Scandinavian School, which has moved rather a long way from Bible research as pursued in other countries, nevertheless agrees with the rest of the schools on a number of basic assumptions of biblical criticism (e.g., the Deuteronomistic edition of the complex of Former Prophets, the compositional continuity existing between the Books of the Former Prophets as well as within the Pentateuch, the supposed times of the official canonization—if not of composition itself—of Deuteronomy and of the Pentateuch as a whole, and the like). In the Hebrew language and in Israel today where the critical study of the Bible is still recent and the academic institutions are still few, one sometimes tends to get the impression that among Bible scholars there is hardly that basic conceptual agreement which can be found between the Scandinavians and the others, since the distance in the very axioms of the subject seems even greater. One is occasionally made to feel that not only do we lack a school of our own, but that the unifying factors in our research work in the Bible and related subjects, apart from its being done in the same country, are merely the common garb of the Hebrew language, agreement on the actual literary material in its objective manifestation and the acknowledgement of the most firm and trivial historical and archeological facts.

Maybe the reasons for this situation are to be sought in the preceding generation of Bible scholars in this country, each of whom was highly individualistic in his scholarly work and all of whom arrived at this field of study from completely different points of view. Some of them did not pay too much heed to the notions of international biblical research (Kaufmann and Buber did take more cognizance of these notions than the rest)—excluding the purely linguistic facts which were admitted by all. Their work too lacked any real common framework, the framework of a school, apart from their using the same language, belonging to the same academic institution, and living in the Land of Israel. There may be a variety of additional reasons for our situation. In any event, the future is likely to loosen the contradictions so that agreement could be reached on a certain basis of common concepts and a theoretical, fruitful dialogue will thus be possible. It is our obligation to hasten this process in order that the professional confusion and multitude of tongues will give way to a significant, harmonious and productive give and take, which would be in the nature of a school.

8

While we wish to impart a specific character to Hebrew biblical criticism in Israel and to join together to make it a trend on its own, we cannot start from zero. Just as we shall not skip over the building-stones laid down by the first generation of scholars in this country, so we must not shut our eyes to real results already achieved by international research. Deliberate ignoring of such results can infrequently be accompanied by a multitude of bibliographical references. An admission of those results makes it incumbent that the critical consideration itself be based on assertions and facts which have been sufficiently tested by philological criteria. Our work must be a continuation of that of International scholarship, that is, from a certain point of contact with the latter onwards—which means that we must base our considerations on its achievements and apply its concepts, namely, those which we will be prepared to accept as confirmed. Modern Bible research has in the course of time undergone a number of metamorphoses, but every one of its stages was in the nature of a sequel of the preceding stage, either directly or by way of dialectic relation. Whoever today attempts to begin the work from the start will be considered as toiling in a vacuum.

Furthermore, let us not try to condemn the whole of biblical scholarship because of defects that can be found in the historical method or in the human capacity of judgment. Let us neither argue in this context for the relativity of historical truth, nor bring as an excuse the objective shortcomings of the documents being studied, which are fragmentary, random, ambiguous—and the subjective limitations of the student, who of necessity relies on prior assumptions and cannot divorce himself from his own personality,

and for whom the material in question is charged with emotional tension.[18] Much truth as there is in such arguments, they cannot uproot biblical criticism from its position. If they do contain a certain reply to the results (the real ones) of this criticism, then it hits the humanistic studies as a whole. He who is not prepared to desist altogether from the effort of knowing and comprehending the historical occurrence would do better to resign himself to the certain weaknesses which are liable to inhere in the humanistic studies and to console himself with the thought that at least he stands on guard over the philological rules so as to reduce the breaches and lessen the danger of vague subjective impressions. All the defects that are apt to occur in the historical method do not justify the approach which represents things in such a way as though research in one of the humanistic subjects (far less in all of them) in the last resort is baseless, being a mere intellectual game whose forms and results change from one generation to another since, in any case, the historical truth will never be obtained, for it has many facets and any given explanation is only a perspective possibility existing along with other or even contrary possibilities. The truth of the matter is that in spite of the oscillations of modern biblical research and beyond its various schools and trends a certain sum total of results adds up which are no more subject to the laws of the pendulum. For our own work, it is important that it be based on these results.

Similarly, we would do well not to brand modern biblical research as "Protestant scholarship," since such a definition might come back as a boomerang hitting "Jewish scholarship." Again, do not let us hide behind a seeming relativism with regard to scholarly work. True, in international Bible scholarship, several lines do actually cross which tend to distinguish between styles of research. Sometimes they admittedly become severe enough as to attest to the influence of national and religious prejudices—yet, even they cannot invalidate the subject and obliterate the philological foundation, which is real and firm enough and from which all the styles are drawn. It is towards this foundation that we must strive and on which we must lean our work for it to persist and be successful.

[18] Characteristic in this regard are B. Uffenheimer's recent remarks in *Ha'aretz* literary supplement of October 4, 1968.

IV.

Key Texts by Yehezkel Kaufmann

(translated into English for the first time)

A Concise Summary of the Work *Golah ve-nekhar*

Introductory Note by Thomas M. Krapf

A prolific scholar and essayist, Yehezkel Koifman (1889-1963) authored almost all his works in Hebrew, thus dwarfing his bibliography in German of some two dozen titles which he published mainly between 1916 and 1933, signing them *Jesekiel Kaufmann*.[1]

Kaufmann's first opus magnum was published just before and after he turned forty: *Golah ve-nekhar* (Exile and Alienation: A Socio-Historical Study on the Issue of the Fate of the People of Israel from Antiquity to the Present, 1929–1930; henceforth *Golah*).[2] This work soon established Kaufmann's fame in the Hebrew language discourse. In 1933, *Golah* earned him the first Bialik Prize for Jewish Studies to be awarded. Hayyim Nahman Bialik (1873–1934), Kaufmann's former teacher at the Odessa Modern Yeshivah in 1907–1910,[3] was euphoric about the significance of his former student's contribution to the Jewish and Hebrew academic discourse. Unshakably convinced that the Hebrew University would forfeit a rare opportunity, should it fail to appoint Kaufmann to a professorship, Bialik prevailed on the first chancellor of the Hebrew University to facilitate Kaufmann's appointment. On 9 March, 1930, he wrote to Judah Leon Magnes (1877–1948) as follows:[4]

> This time I am under the powerful impression of the work *Golah ve-nekhar*, Part II, still fresh from the printing press, and I have finished reading it twice. In my view, this is a great work, and for a long time there has been nothing on a par with it in Israel. Two more parts are about to be published. In its four volumes (*sic*)[5] the work will cover all the fundamental problems of Israel's fate among the nations, from the day it went into Exile up to the present. It also seeks to make out future prospects and to delineate new avenues. All this based on a profound and broad insight of a kind that is unusu-

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1 See Thomas Krapf, *Yehezkel Kaufmann: Ein Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg zur Theologie der* Hebräischen *Bibel* (Studien zu Kirche und Israel 11; Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum, 1990), 47f.; Krapf, *Koifman*, in this volume, pp. 3-44, consider pp. 37-39.

2 1929: Books 1–2 (= vol. I); 1930: Books 3–4 (= vol. II) by Dvir, Tel Aviv. While *Golah* translates effortlessly to German as "Exil und Fremde," the Hebrew notion *nekhar* (German: "Fremde") needs to be rendered with both "alienation/estrangement" and "foreign lands" in English. Hence the English translation of the title ought to convey "Exile and Alienation/Estrangement/Foreign Lands," followed by the subtitle.

3 See Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg*, 30; Krapf, *Koifman,* in this volume, p. 29.

4 H. N. Bialik, *Letters of Hayyim Nahman Bialik* (in Hebrew; 5 vols.; ed. Fishel Lachower; Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1937–1939), 5:44–45 (my translation from Hebrew).

5 The four components of the work to which Bialik is referring are the four *parts*, not "volumes" (of which there were only two).

> al in our contemporary literature. I am drawing your attention to this outstanding work recommending that you make time to read it. I am sure you will do me this favor. How I ardently wish to see a man of such broad knowledge and profound wisdom as the author of this work within the walls of the University. Two, three men like him are all it takes to bring new vigor into the University, and to give a new aspect to the entire evolution of Hebrew education and scholarship. Keep the author's name in mind: Yehezkel Kaufmann. My intuition tells me that a redeemer of Hebrew thought is among us.

Bialik's initiative was unsuccessful, as the Hebrew University did not appoint Kaufmann to its faculty until 1949.[6] Nevertheless, the significance of *Golah* was certainly recognized in the 1930s. Considerable efforts were made to have it translated to European languages, both in the 1930s and after World War II.[7] However, none of these initiatives were successful, and Kaufmann did not live to see the English publication of the three chapters on the origins of Christianity half a century after *Golah* had been published.[8]

Back in 1936, Kaufmann himself had authored a highly succinct 3,000-word summary in German of his *Golah,* a Hebrew text of over 1,000 pages. The existence of this German summary had been unknown for more than half a century, before it surfaced in 1989. At that time, in the course of my research on Kaufmann's biography,[9] I had both the privilege of reviewing his personal papers[10] and of discovering this important text in the process. In addition to this gem, Kaufmann's personal archives also yielded extensive documentation on the circumstances that induced him to make the effort to commit this summary to writing, at a time when he had already decided to cease publishing his contributions to biblical studies in German.[11] Conceivably, Kaufmann was hoping that this short summary might facilitate making *Golah* accessible to the larger public outside the intellectual discourse in Hebrew.

In 1936, the Vienna-based Zionist historian and well connected editor Adolf Böhm (1873-1941) inquired of Abraham Schwadron (1878–1957), a

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6 See Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg*, 59–60, 78; Krapf*, Koifman,* in this volume, pp. 40-41.

7 Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg*, 61; Krapf, *Koifman,* in this volume, p. 29.

8 Yehezkel Kaufmann, *Christianity and Judaism. Two Covenants* (trans. C. W. Efroymson; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988). This is an English translation of *Golah*, vol. 1, chaps. 7–9.

9 See footnote 1 above.

10 *Yehezkel Kaufmann Archive* of the Jewish National Library in Jerusalem, cited in the following as "*Kaufmann Archive,* no."

11 See Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg*, 72–75; Krapf, *Koifman,* in this volume, pp. 37-39.

famous autograph collector in Jerusalem,[12] whether any translations of the much discussed Hebrew work *Golah* had been published.[13] Schwadron referred Böhm's enquiry to Kaufmann, who was living in Haifa at the time. On 31 August, 1936, Kaufmann replied to Schwadron that to date *Golah* had not been translated, and made the following offer: "I could write a summary in German of a few pages for Dr. Böhm, outlining the general argument of my book, provided he quotes the summary, should he use it."[14]

After three weeks Böhm sent Kaufmann a postcard: "Herr Dr. Schwadron has let me know, that for volume II of my work you would be willing to communicate the general argument of your book. I am *extremely* grateful to you. Accurate citing *goes without saying.* Never would I appropriate somebody else's intellectual property!"[15]

Four weeks later, on 27 October, 1936, Böhm wrote to Kaufmann thanking him for his German summary, congratulating him on his work and discussing some of its issues.[16] This response documents that Böhm was not going to discuss Kaufmann's summary of *Golah* in his new edition of *Die Zionistische Bewegung,* as he had initially contemplated.[17] Subsequently, Böhm never had another opportunity of processing Kaufmann's text in his own work, as he and his wife were murdered in the *Shoa,* before he managed to find the peace of mind to concentrate on his planned volume III.[18]

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[12] His vast collection of documents, the *Abraham Schwadron Collection,* belongs to the National Library in Jerusalem. On the collection's origins, see Abraham Schwadron, "Meine Autographen- und Porträtsammlung," *Jüdische Rundschau*, 3.1.1928.

[13] This is evident from Kaufmann's letter to Schwadron of 31 August, 1936 *(Abraham Schwadron Collection, National Library Jerusalem, Jeheskel Kaufmann*).

[14] See the previous note (my translation from Hebrew).

[15] Postcard of 23 September, 1936, *Kaufmann Archive*, no. 115b (my translation from German, emphases in the original).

[16] There is no date on the type-written manuscript of "A Concise Summary of the Work *Golah ve-nekhar."* However, the outlined correspondence provides the circumstantial evidence required to date the text: it must have been authored between Adolf Böhm's two communications of 23 September and 27 October, 1936. Considering that during this period three exchanges of letters/postcards took place by mail between Vienna and Haifa, it would seem that the text must have been committed to writing in the first half of October 1936.

[17] Böhm's explanation that he would only be able to refer to Kaufmann's summary "in the 2nd edition of volume I" ("in der 2. Auflage von Band I") appears to be erroneous, since volume I had already been published in its "2nd expanded edition" ("zweite erweiterte Auflage") in 1935. The planned third volume never came to fruition.

[18] Apart from making intellectual contributions to cultural and academic life, Adolf Böhm was a successful industrialist and highly respected leader of the Jewish community in Vienna. Following the *Anschluss* or "Integration" of Austria into the Third Reich on 12 March, 1938, Böhm had to countenance visits by SS-Obersturmbannführer Adolf Eichmann to his cotton wool factory on every week day for six weeks. Böhm never responded to the henchman's demands of a hit list with the names of the most influential and most wealthy Jews in Austria. When Eichmann tried to have six leaders of the Jewish community, who had not yet been deported to Dachau, appoint Böhm to serve as their

In his letter to Kaufmann of 27 October, 1936, Böhm encouraged the author of *Golah* to try to have an abridged German translation of his work published by the publisher Schocken. He also urged Kaufmann to have his German summary re-printed in the newspaper *Jüdische Rundschau.* It is not known whether Kaufmann took any initiatives to follow up on either of these suggestions. In his extensive personal archives, there is nothing to suggest that he did. In any event, in the two remaining years of the *Jüdische Rundschau*[19] it did not publish the text Kaufmann had committed to writing for Böhm's benefit.

In the following, both Kaufmann's German summary of *Golah* and Adolf Böhm's response to it are documented in English translations.[20] All footnotes are by the translator.

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liaison, they chose Alois Rothenberg instead, in order to spare Böhm further duress. However, this did not put an end to Böhm's ordeal of Eichmann's visitation routine.
In the process, Böhm suffered a nervous breakdown, from which he never recovered. Having been shunted around the infrastructure of the industrialized murder administration for at least seven months, Böhm was eventually disappeared to the *Tötungsanstalt Hartheim* (near Linz) on 13 March, 1941, where more than 70,000 handicapped victims were gassed ("Aktion T4"). The official death certificate, issued in Berlin and mailed from Poland, had Adolf Böhm "die" on 10 April, 1941 in Chelm, Poland. This merely documents his murder, which in all likelihood was committed at the *Tötungsanstalt Hartheim.* Böhm's wife, Olga, was murdered at Auschwitz in 1944.

19 The last edition of the *Jüdische Rundschau* appeared on 8 November, 1938, i.e., one day before the infamous pogrom night wreaked havoc throughout Jewry within the borders of the Third Reich.

20 For the original version of Kaufmann's German summary of *Golah,* a type-written manuscript (Kaufmann *Archive*, no 75), see Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg*, 123–33. The original German version of Böhm's reply to Kaufmann, a hand written letter (*Kaufmann Archive,* no 115 b) is documented in T. Krapf, "*Exil und Fremde*—Ein Gedankenaustausch zwischen Jesekiel Kaufmann und Adolf Böhm," *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts* 87 (1990): 67–79. The purpose of this publication had been to document the original German versions of both Kaufmann's summary of *Golah* and Böhm's response to it. Regrettably, my manuscript went to press with several long omissions including entire passages of Kaufmann's text. Since vol. 87 was the last issue of the *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts* to be published, there was no opportunity of retrospective emendation. Thus the only authentic documentation of Kaufmann's text is Krapf, *Kaufmann: Lebens- und Erkenntnisweg,* 123–33.

A Concise Summary of the Work *Golah ve-nekhar*[1]

Yehezkel KAUFMANN

In four books,[2] the work addresses the entire problem of Judaism, taking into account both the problem of its history and the problem of its present. The peculiarity of the history of the Jewish people is the result of the "fateful" coinciding of different factors. Decisive were above all: (1) the cultural-religious p o w e r, and (2) the ethnic-political p o w e r l e s s n e s s of the Jewish people.

To begin with, what is the solution to the fundamental question: the paradox of the Jewish people continuing to exist in its dispersion?

This historical phenomenon cannot be explained with reference to racial difference,[3] perennial persecution, economic conditions, or the drive of national self-preservation. The primeval uniqueness of the Jewish people consists of its culture, to be more precise: of its religion. Hence we need to conclude that it is the cause of its unique history. The religious uniqueness of the people was the *prima causa*[4] and in addition other factors came into play. However, the religion did not operate as a "national cult" (Hess).[5] National culture always dissipates as a result of dispersion and linguistic assimilation. Had Judaism been a truly national religion, it could *not possibly* have survived the Exile. In reality the religion of Israel was a universal religion. It sought to embrace all nations. This is borne out by both the hopes of the prophets and by the purely religious proselytism of Judaism, according to which every human being may become an "Israelite" by religious rite only. The universal character of the Jewish religion was of deci-

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1 Translated and annotated by Thomas M. Krapf. In the following emphases rendered by underlining in Kaufmann's original typescript are reproduced in italics. Quotation marks and spaced print correspond to the original. Where the English translation fails to convey the subject of emphasis, this is recorded in an editorial note. Single, double and triple spacing between paragraphs follows the layout of the typescript.

2 See footnote 2 above.

3 Kaufmann uses the word "Rassenunterschied."

4 Latin for "fundamental reason" or "main reason."

5 Moses Hess (1812–1875), protagonist of socialism and Zionism. During his life time, he primarily influenced the German and European left as a socialist author and activist. In 1848, Hess parted company with Karl Marx (1818–1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820–1895), considering their approach, with its exaggerated emphasis of materialistic-economic issues, as lopsided. Hess' lasting legacy was his late work, *Rome and Jerusalem: A Study in Jewish Nationalism* (published in German in 1862), a classic that left a lasting impact on the Zionist discourse of the 19th and 20th centuries. Inter alia, Leo Pinsker (1821–1891), Peretz Smolenskin (1842–1885) and Aḥad Ha-ʿAm (1856–1927) were indebted to it. Theodor Herzl (1860–1904) referred to it as a precursor of the contemporary Zionist concept (diary entry of 2 May, 1901).

sive significance for the preservation of the dispersed and linguistically assimilated people. A u n i v e r s a l factor was of n a t i o n a l consequence. This is indeed the core of the paradox. How was this possible?

In Israel, an altogether new religious idea entered the world, hitherto unknown to all humankind, namely, the concept of a supra-magical, supra-mythological, sole god. The idea was of phenomenal consequence. Only over the course of many centuries did it evolve its entire impact. It aimed at eradicating the pagan perception of god and the world. Initially, battle was done in Israel. In bloody battles paganism was defeated. Subsequently, the war against the paganism of the nations began. Again, the new religious idea prevailed. The work expounds in extensive detail that it was precisely *Judaism* that overcame paganism. In Christianity and in Islam the Jewish idea was simply becoming effective.

However, parallel to this series of historical facts, there is another one that runs in the reverse direction: the *religion* of Israel was victorious, but *Israel* was vanquished by the pagans. The Israelite religious concept was mightier than paganism, but the pagans were more mighty than Israel. The Heavenly Jerusalem proceeded to conquer the world, while the Earthly Jerusalem lay in ruins. Israel did not own empires, politically it was perennially weak, and eventually it was subjugated and exiled. The dichotomy between the idea and the reality was formidable. The defeat of the people, the owner of the idea, stood in the way of its proliferation. The pagans could not receive the religion out of the hands of the vanquished and subjugated people. Hence the victory of the idea could only be realized under one condition: the religion had to be *severed* from the people. Not from peoplehood per se, but from the despised people. Not in order to become more universal. For Christianity and Islam are not an iota more universal than Judaism, as is demonstrated in great detail. But the religion had to be extricated from the ignominy of the exiled people. To absorb the Jewish religion, paganism required a "new covenant," a pagans' covenant that was independent of the real Jews. New prophets had to come. In Christianity and Islam, this disengagement was carried out. The pagans became the "true" Israel; the real Israel was "discarded." Jesus (or rather Paul) and Mohammad were the prophets of the new covenants.

However, it is clear that the Jews themselves had no share in this need of the pagan world. In Israel, the fight for paganism, that was now raging in the pagan world, had already been decided in times immemorial. The Messiah of the Jews was not to be the founder of a new religion. Given the altitude of their religious consciousness, they were in no need of a new covenant. For Christianity and Islam, there was no role within Judaism. In this way, the Jewish people stayed beyond the great religious movements that unfolded in the pagan world. It remained true to the "old covenant." Thus a chasm between the Jews and the nations came about that could no longer be

bridged. It is a fact of Jewish history of all times: never has there been a drive in Judaism towards Christianity or Islam on *religious* grounds. Persecution or acquisitiveness has motivated some or even many to convert. But there was no falling away for genuinely religious motives. Due to this development, Judaism, albeit universal *per se*, remained the legacy of the Jewish people. It thus became the "tribal religion," the tribal characteristic of the Jewish people. This has been of tremendous social-historical significance.

The history of the *galuth*[6] is the history of a "universal nation," a nation that is held together by a universal factor: a religious community that is a tribal community at the same time. In the Diaspora, the Jewish people has indeed been a "spiritual nation." But precisely because of this, it became the *ghetto people*.

Many have chosen to regard the ghetto as a community of non-working, "brokering" persons (Berdizcewsky,[7] Brenner[8] et al.). But this notion is incorrect. It is borrowed from anti-Semitism and is based on ignorance. Most ghetto Jews were working. Only to some extent and by force were the Jews estranged from working. They had to fight hard for their right to work. "Ghetto" is not an economic, but an *ethnic*-social notion. The ghetto community is a community perennially in want of the *natural ethnic right to territory*. The latter legal concept is of fundamental significance. Without it, the Jewish problem cannot be comprehended under any circumstances.

The natural right to territory of a people cannot be comprehended either as a notion of positive law or in political terms. It is a primordial category of the consciousness of the people, of the popular concept of law. Apart from the right to property of the individual, of the family, of the class, of the state, of the church etc., there exists, from time immemorial, a peculiar natural right to a specific portion of the surface of the earth that is owned by the ethnic group (the tribe, the people etc.). This right is "vested," it does not rest on a *contrat social* nor is it based on any written law. In virtue of this right, since time immemorial the surface of the earth has been distributed in *tribal territories*. The peoples considered themselves "born of the earth," regarded certain territories as "belonging" to them, as their "property." The boundaries of these territories were delineated by the set-

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6 The semantics of the Hebrew word *galuth,* which Kaufmann uses in his German text, include both "(forced) exile" and "Diaspora."

7 Micha Joseph Berdizcewsky (later: Bin-Gorion; 1865–1921), Hebrew writer and thinker (sporadic publications in Yiddish and German). He came from a Hassidic rabbis' family and had a highly ambivalent attitude to the Jewish *shtetl* of his eastern European ancestors. With an eclectic intellectual disposition, he was a freethinker and averse to ideological commitment.

8 Joseph Haim Brenner (1881–1921), Hebrew writer, socialist author und activist.

tlement of the tribes. A territory belongs to the tribe that abides in it. The characteristic of this belonging is: the natural *prevalence of the language.* The linguistic boundaries are the natural borders of the tribal lands. *Cuius lingua eius terra*[9]—this is a primordial law of world history. The bearer of the ethnic right to territory is the tribe. It is therefore acquired solely by the *belonging to the tribe*.

Nowhere in exile were the Jews in a position to attain such a right to territory. The dissemination of the Jews in the lands of the nations did not bear the hallmark of ethnic settlement. Nowhere have the Jews as a tribe taken possession of a country. Everywhere they settled in "neighbourhoods of aliens."[10] Nowhere did they create an independent ethnic economy as a foundation for the natural predominance of the national culture in a specific tract of land. This state of affairs manifested itself in the *linguistic assimilation* of the Diaspora. Everywhere the Jews were speaking the language of their environment. Their ethnic strength was crushed. They were unable to attain tribal property. No territory, where they settled, was "Jewish." This is the historical-social significance of the Assimilation, which is an inner trait of Diaspora existence: i.e., the characteristic of the inability to acquire the right to tribal territory[11] in one's own right. Assimilation harbours the recognition of foreign tribal sovereignty. The linguistic assimilation indicated that the normal foundation of their separate ethnic existence was no more. Henceforth they could attain a natural ethnic right to territory solely by *joining the tribal community of the ambient population.*

However, this basic disposition of the exilic community to assimilate was countered by a peculiar factor: the universal factor of the religious evolution that distinguished them from the environment. And to be sure, not merely as a religious, but also as an ethnic group. For as a result of the course of history, the Jewish religion became both the tribal religion and the characteristic of a tribe. The basic disposition to assimilate could never fully come into its own. The religion posited a "universal" barrier. The Jews were unable to join the tribal community of their environment. Consequently, they were likewise unable to gain a share in the natural right to tribal territory of their environment. They were, thus, *a community that could attain neither its own nor a foreign right to tribal territory.* Everywhere they remained "alien." The state was able to grant them political and civil rights or privileges. It was unable to give them a natural right to tribal territory. Precisely this was thier cruel and fateful calamity.

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9 Latin for "whose language, his land," analogous to *cuius regio, eius religio* "whose realm, his religion," the principle of the 1555 Peace of Augsburg.

10 "Fremdenvierteln" (quotation marks in the original).

11 "Stammesbodenrecht" is introduced and used by Kaufmann as a technical term. In this translation it is rendered "right to tribal territory."

Thus the "being alien" of the Jews in the lands of the nations is not a malicious invention of the enemies. Its most profound roots are in the psyche of the Jewish people.

From this vantage point the ferocious fight of the nations against the Jews of the Diaspora becomes comprehensible. It was a battle of one people against another people. To be sure, the persecutions of the Jews have also had a religious root. However, it appears that national antagonism was pre-dominant, which was often disguised by religious motifs. The cause of the fighting tended to be economic competition. It was the mean "envy of the other's livelihood."[12] But—"envy of the other's livelihood"[13] between human beings, who were facing each other as members of an *alien tribe.* Peoples fighting each other tend to result from economic causes. Fighting the Jews was particularly fierce, because they were always felt to be "alien to the land." It was a peculiar "civil war" based on ethnicity.

To be sure, the following observation is of fundamental historical significance: at all times the driving force behind the fight against the Jews has been *the broad popular masses.* For Diaspora Jewry, the basis of subsistence was the "privileges," which they were granted by the state, virtually always—against the will of the populace. The populace, the demos, would be incensed against the Jews. The kings, the nobility protected them against the wrath of the rabble. The kings and the nobles call the Jews to come into the land. The populace always seeks means to get rid of them again. This can be observed everywhere: in Greece, in the Roman Empire, in Spain, in France, in Germany, in Poland, etc. An "Empire" is the most advantageous state for the Jews.

Of course this is not without cause.

The *malum metaphysicum*[14] of the Diaspora was the "being alien," the lack of the natural right to tribal territory. However that may be, at all times the bearers of this right were the peoples, not the state. The state of old was often in conflict to this right. It always tended to be a law unto itself**.** It was "above the people."[15] The populace and the state were divided. The state could favour, what the populace would fight. In the legal sphere of the state, there was space for the Jews, but in the legal sphere of the populace, the Jews had no place. Hence the Jews could solely rely on their "privileges." To the populace and also to the land, they remained "alien."

The legal manifestation of this peculiar situation of the Diaspora was the *Autonomy.* This was something altogether different from autonomy of mi-

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12 "gemeiner Brotneid" (quotation marks in the original).

13 "Brotneid" (quotation marks in the original).

14 Latin for "metaphysical evil," analogous to the philosophical and theological notion *malum physicum* "natural evil."

15 "übervolklich" (quotation marks in the original).

norities in certain modern states. It was not the recognition of limited sovereignty within defined territory, but the constitution of an "alien" community. Thus it was also perceived by the Jewish people. The predicament of the Diaspora people translated into the mood, which manifested itself as the *messianic hope.* The people, unable to attain a land in the dispersion, perennially dreamed of re-gaining its own land. The unabating antagonism of the peoples kept this hope perennially awake and vivid.

In Modern Times an acute turnabout occurred.

With the Enlightenment, the Age of Emancipation and, above all, the age of the *new assimilation* dawn in Jewish history. For assimilation per se is as old as the Diaspora. In Modern Times, however, it emerges in an altogether new form. First of all, in this era the assimilation is extraordinarily intense and pervasive. Particularly characteristic, however, is its manifestation as a *movement* and *namely*—as a *"messianic"* movement. To be sure, the new assimilation was also a natural process. But far more significant was that it was purposeful pursuit. It was a social movement, which set itself the "messianic" goal of solving the *galuth*[16] *question.* It was a "theory," an "ideology." It was closely affiliated with the "messianic" movements of Europe: with the Enlightenment, with humanism, with democracy, with liberalism, with socialism.

In this work, the various forms, which the theories of assimilation have taken in eastern and western Europe since the Enlightenment, are researched in extensive detail. It is established that assimilation aimed at a sole goal: attaining the natural right to tribal territory in the lands of the Diaspora. This was, albeit perceived merely reconditely, its "messianic" goal. Since the Jewish tribe was incapable of attaining such a right, the Jews as individuals were supposed to acquire it by being incorporated into the peoples "nationally." By virtue of the national assimilation, they were expected to become "indigenous." Initially (in the early 19th century), the discussion was about unification with the *state,* then with the "nation" (according to French usage of the term), then with the *language,* then with the *culture,* and eventually also—with the *people.* The Jews are no longer a nation. The Jews are no longer a people. Indeed, the Jews in Exile had never been a "nation," etc. Are they, however, a *tribe*? To be sure, tribe equals "race," and race is "fraud." In this way, this fundamental issue was dodged.

The ideology of assimilation has been referred to as the product of the slavish mentality of western Jewry. However, this is only part of the truth and merely on a subjective level. For in reality, this ideology was the ultimate outcome of an objective historical necessity. The assimilation of the Jews was a *heavy demand of the nations* in modern times. Indeed, it was the spokespersons of *non-Jewish,* liberal society, who created the theory of

[16] See above, p. 275, fn. 6.

assimilation. It was the theory of the friends of the Jews who wished to resolve the Jewish question in Europe once and for all. Since *Clermont-Tonnere*,[17] the condition of the "national" assimilation has again and again been made out to be indispensable for emancipation. Subsequently, the Jews appropriated this theory. It was their "messianic" hope. But it was also more than that. Jewry perceived correctly that the existence of the Jews among the nations in modern times depended on the probation of this theory.

Why was assimilation a necessity? Why did liberal society demand the "national" assimilation of the Jews? Why was the Jewish "national question" the *first* national question in Europe?

This is the fundamental question of modern Jewish history.

In the wake of the collapse of the old dynastic, aristocratic, corporate state, the legal and actual cause of existence of ghetto Jewry was no more. A community relying on "privileges" granted by the rulers was now impossible. In the new state, the *people* was sovereign—the "demos," the primordial enemy of ghetto Jewry. What is to become of the Jews at this point? The situation was altogether new. Now a pact with the people had to be struck: to be sure, initially democracy was liberal and complied willingly. The Jews have to exit their seclusion to merge with the sovereign "people." This demand was being raised with increasing forcefulness: The Jews must join the "people" by means of "national" assimilation.

At the time of the French Revolution, the democratic ideology was *cosmopolitan.* The "people" was perceived as an abstract "society." In reality, however, in its innermost core democracy was *national.* This work expounds in extensive detail that the modern national movement of the peoples of Europe and Asia is rooted in democracy. Democracy did not give sovereignty to the "people," but to the *peoples*. Democracy was bent on establishing the state on a *national* foundation. The nationality principle was a principal maxim of the democratic age. However, what does this principle mean? Surely nothing other than: the highest possible political priority is due to the natural right to tribal territory. Every people should rule in its tribal land. Now the primordial notion of the natural right to tribal territory attained highest validity.

Now there was one single people in Europe, that did *not* own a right of this kind: the Jewish people. Nowhere was there even one span of "Jewish"

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[17] Comte Stanislas-Marie-Adélaïde de Clermont-Tonnere (1757–1792) advocated civil equality for the Jews, holding that as a nation the Jews needed to be denied everything, while all rights had to be granted to them as citizens of the state: "Il faut tout refuser aux Juifs comme nation et tout leur accorder comme individus; il faut qu'ils ne fassent dans l'Etat ni un corps politique ni un ordre: il faut qu'ils soient individuellement citoyens." Due to this statement in the *Assemblée constituante* on 23 December, 1789 the slogan, "Tout aux Juifs comme citoyens, rien comme nation!" is attributed to Clermont-Tonnere.

land. In the community of peoples, this people alone could not lay claim to its own natural right to territory. Everywhere, it dwelled on "alien" tribal land. Could it, however, continue to exist as a "landless," "alien" ghetto people? The "privileges" were gone. Furthermore, there was no longer any authority that could protect it against its primordial enemy, the demos. No longer was it possible that it continued to remain "alien." It appeared that it had no other alternative left than to merge with the peoples by means of "national" assimilation.

At this point, one and a half centuries of assimilation have established beyond dispute that this has been a wild-goose chase after phantoms. "National" assimilation has indeed been nothing but theory. A genuine assimilation is in no need of a theory. The assimilation of the Jews needed to be, first and foremost, "proven;" hence it was not real. For in spite of all the assimilation, with regard to one decisive point everything remained as of old: even now the Jews were still a special *tribe.* (For indeed, tribe does not equal "race"). They were, after all, not just "coreligionists," but also "members of the same tribe."[18] They were "only" a religious community. But in the wake of the course of history, the Jewish religion became a tribal religion and was therefore a distinct tribal feature. The attempts to strip off what is "national" by means of a Reform were doomed to fail. For it did not come down so much to the content as it did to the matter of the historic connection between the Jewish tribe and the Jewish religion. There was no reform in the world that could eliminate this connection. Hence, as a tribe the Jews remained alien to the peoples. Therefore, assimilation could not procure them a share in the natural right to tribal territory of the peoples. They remained "alien"—they had not become "indigenous" according to popular perception. The *malum metaphysicum* of the Diaspora people endured. Assimilation had not attained its "messianic" goal. In the cultural sphere, it was successful, formidably successful. But as for the *social question* of the Exile, it was unable to provide a solution. Hence it has failed as a movement. It has been incapable of procuring the Jews *a home.*

When the new anti-Semitism erupted in the 80s,[19] it dawned on the Jewish people that now an altogether different path had to be taken. There was no turning back to the medieval Ghetto. In the democratic state this was not possible. There was no alternative: The Jews had to procure themselves a genuine right to a home. However, only *as a tribe* did they have this option.

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[18] A literal translation of Kaufmann's juxtaposition "Glaubensgenossen" and "Stammesgenossen" might read "co-religionists" and "co-tribalists."

[19] The "new anti-Semitism of the 80s" in the 19th century refers both to the pogroms and the suppression of the largest Jewish community ruled by Tsar Alexander III (1881–1894), and to the virulent anti-Semitism in Germany at that time. Holding these two developments to be inter-connected, Kaufmann considers the "new anti-Semitism of the 80s" as the beginning of a new era of hatred of the Jews.

What assimilation and emancipation had failed to give them as individuals, they now have to seek to attain as a tribe. This gave rise to the *Jewish National Movement,* whose historical goal is solely and only: *a Jewish land.* The intellectual endeavours are nothing but side effects of this fundamental endeavour.

Assimilation and national movement thus originate from the same root: the necessity that arose for the Jews in the age of the rule of the demos to attain home territory.

Apart from that the solution of the Jewish question is only possible by means of the disappearance of the old culture, namely of all religion. This is the promise of communism. However, the price demanded in return is egregious: the surrender of the human soul, intellectual enslavement and impoverishment. It is unlikely that humankind will wish to pay this price. This prospect is therefore also "messianic." So within foreseeable historical time, there is only one route for the Jewish people: into the Jewish land.

PALÄSTINA

Zeitschrift für den Aufbau Palästinas
Herausgeber und Redakteur (im Ehrenamt): ADOLF BÖHM
Wien XIV/1, Postfach Amt 103[20]

Vienna, 27 October, 36

Very esteemed Herr Dr,[21]

I have just received your kind mail and I am extremely grateful for the great effort you have taken to inform me about your line of thought.
To begin with: for me the issue *per se* belongs with the subject matter of my volume I, where I have briefly described the Emancipation "and its consequences" and later outlined the Zionist theories in the first chapter. Therefore I can only come back to your book in the 2nd edition of vol. I. But perhaps there will be an opportunity in vol. III. Vol. II (actual history up to the end of 1925) is now going to press.
In any event, it is important to me to know your theory, which appears to me to be extraordinarily interesting. On many issues my opinion accords with yours. In a series of lectures I delivered at Bnei Brith, I have delineated incisively, that in Judaism the national element and the *universal* element have been preserved profoundly interconnected, and with the highest degree of awareness … "When the barriers of the ghetto opened up, the universalism of the Jews was set free literally like an explosion" etc. However, in this regard I did not go as far as you did. But I have already described in my

[20] Below this printed letter head Böhm's hand written letter follows on three pages. In the following translation, his underlined passages are italicized.
[21] This line reads "Sehr geschätzter Herr Dr."

book that the Jews embraced assimilation enthusiastically, when they believed they saw their messianic ideals (peace among the nations, rule of the spirit and ethics) being realized by the peoples.
The incisive delineation of the right to territory of every nation is the novelty and the interesting aspect, also the pivot of your argument! To be sure, we Zionists have always pointed out that the Jews have been excluded from acquiring land, that without being rooted etc. no own culture, no guarantee of survival would be possible, but never has this been made the focus of the discussion in a comparable way.
Moreover, it is important to emphasize that it has always been the *people,* who were hostile against the Jews, likewise that the longing for *Eretz Israel*[22] included the hope for land.
The discussions on assimilation—some of which I have occasionally developed along similar lines: purposeful pursuit, demand of the non-Jews, objective necessity et al.—ought to be translated to German. In my view, this is very *urgent.* We do not have an adequate theory (and history) of assimilation, we need this urgently, if only to propagate the Zionist idea, which is still being rejected by the majority of German Jews. (We have *nothing* at all on recent history—surely, I may save my breath regarding Dubnow[23]).
I am not quite convinced that already in the 19th century, the era of the emergence of the large cities, of industry (rural flight), of the rationalistic *Weltanschauung*, "the right to tribal territory" was being emphasized by democracy. In my view, this is more of a logical construction *a posteriori,* in the wake of today's blood-soil-theory. For *today,* however, this is correct.
Would it not be possible that a section of your book be published in German? Schocken would certainly have it published. Given the dreadful paucity of our ideological literature and research, this would be very welcome. Schocken suffers from a lack of editable works. The director of the publishing house, Dr M Spitzer, is in Jerusalem right now. But Schocken himself could certainly become interested.

Again many thanks, in any event I will be keeping track of your work. With Zion-Greeting[24]

humbly

Böhm

PS: Could this summary not be published in the *Jüdische Rundschau*?

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22 I.e. "the (Holy) Land of Israel." Although Böhm does not master Hebrew, here he writes the Hebrew letters א and י, the acronym for "E(retz) I(srael)."

23 The first edition of Dubnow's opus magnum was Aaron Steinberg's German translation of Dubnow's unpublished Russian manuscript: *Weltgeschichte des jüdischen Volkes: Von seinen Uranfängen bis zur Gegenwart, vol. I–X,* Berlin 1925–1929.

24 Böhm concludes in three lines: "Mit Zionsgruss / ergebenst / Böhm."

The General Character of Israelite Religion*

Yehezkel KAUFMANN

Unity and Incorporeality

The question of the emergence of Israelite religion is a sui generis problem in the history of the human spirit first of all because of the *popular character* of Israelite monotheism.

To our way of thinking, the idea of God's unity is one of the most abstract ideas in human thought. We regard this idea as bound up with abstraction (*hafshatah*)** from the multitude of phenomena manifested in our world and with grounding all reality on an invisible unity beyond our comprehension. The one God is the cause of causes, eternal substance, the being of all beings, transcending everything sensible and conceivable, beyond all conception of time and space, a supreme idea. The question is: How could such a faith come into being in ancient Israel? Israelite culture was a culture of shepherds and farmers. Moreover, even in a later period the creative genius of the Israelite people did not find embodiment in the creation of a conceptual culture (nor, for that matter, in the creation of a technological culture). Israel did not create conceptual science, logic, philosophy, or natural science. Its strength was in poetry, narrative, ethics, religious vision, and the like, far from theoretical abstraction. Nor was its language rich in abstract concepts. The Hebrew of the biblical period was a pictorial and poetic language, unfitted for expressing philosophical views. How, then, was the monotheistic idea conceived in ancient Israel within such a cultural rubric?

Moreover, biblical monotheism did not arrive at abstract expression. The Bible innocently resorts to tangible descriptions of God. It does not sense any defect in depicting God through imagery.*** The biblical God is

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* Ofiyah ha-kelali shel ha-emunah ha-yisre'elit (אפיה הכללי של האמונה הישראלית). Chap. 9 of *Toledot ha-emunah ha-yisre'elit*, translated by Lenny Levin.—Translator's note: I am deeply grateful to Professor Lawrence Kaplan for reading and commenting on an earlier version of my translation.

** Translator's note: The Hebrew term *hafshatah* (from the Hebrew root *hifshit*, to strip off clothing, etc.—see Gen. 37:23) connotes both abstraction and incorporeality. In the contrast between the biblical and Greek-philosophical conceptions of God, both these aspects are relevant. Accordingly, *hafshatah* will be translated "abstraction" or "incorporeality" as suits each context, but in many contexts, both are implied. In rare cases, I have even spelled out both English equivalents in the translation to emphasize this double significance.

*** Translator's note: There is a particular challenge in translating the key terms in this essay representing mental pictorial images that the biblical and rabbinic authors con-

holy and exalted, eternal and almighty, righteous, good and merciful. But philosophically examined, the biblical conception is nothing but the popular vision of God. The Bible does not refrain from depicting God with the colors of the popular imagination. In a later period the imagery in the Bible became a matter of interest for philosophers, who interpreted them in their own fashion by departing from their plain sense. Our question may therefore be phrased: How did Israel arrive at the monotheistic idea from such a non-philosophical conception of the divinity?

Many have tried to find various solutions to this double problem. There were some who sought to see Israelite monotheism as a discovery to be credited to the general worldview of the Near East. The cradle of monothe-

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ceived to represent the deity. Kaufmann's most frequent Hebrew terms for this are *demut* and the phrase *dimmui demut* used here (or in other contexts *dimmui demuyot*). Ideally, it might have been preferable to use a consistent word or word-root throughout the essay for Kaufmann's terms *dimmui* and *demut*. But the most obvious English terms, "image" and "likeness" (both taken from the standard English translations of the account in Genesis 1 of God creating the human being in the divine image or the divine likeness), both have defects. The term "image" is unfortunately too close to the term "graven image," which is precisely what is prohibited by the Second Commandment. (As Kaufmann uses the term *pesilim* for "graven images," the Hebrew original does not raise the same problems of ambiguity for the reader as would be raised by an English translation of *demut* as "image.") The term "likeness" also has its limitations, because it refers to a copy of the original, whereas the issue at stake here is that the biblical authors imagined that the deity himself has an intrinsic shape or form that is a property of the original, not just of a copy; however, there are contexts where "likeness" works well in the translation. "Appearance" also has the unfortunate side effect of implying that what is referred to is a mere appearance that differs from the underlying reality. In passages such as the present, where the emphasis is on the creation of these images in the imagination of the biblical author, I am able to speak of "imagery" (and elsewhere "imagistic depiction"), which in English has the connotation of a literary figure rather than a plastic representation. This does not work in contexts where the emphasis is on the intrinsic reality of the form in the deity himself. In such cases, I have occasionally adopted the term "visage" (< *video*, "to see") to refer to the form of the deity that is an intrinsic feature of his nature but that is visible on rare occasions to the perceiver. I am alerting the reader to this variation of terminology, which is all in the service of trying to communicate Kaufmann's main thesis. To summarize this thesis in my own words: (a) The biblical and rabbinic authors were rich in devising word-pictures and mental pictorial images representing the deity; (b) they did not regard these mental images as crossing the line drawn by the Second Commandment prohibiting plastic images; (c) they conceived God as actually or possibly having a quasi-material form to which these mental images corresponded; and (d) that God could have such an actual form did not offend against their notion of God's sublimity and absolute mastery over the created world (at least, until Jewish thinkers adopted the philosophical notion of divine incorporeality well into the middle ages). Within this complex thesis, Kaufmann uses the terminology of *dimmui demut* (and synonymous terms) to speak both of the work of the imagination of the biblical authors in creating these images and of their belief that these images had or could have a real referent in God's own nature. As no single word in English will work for both of these usages, I have tended to prefer "imagery" in talking of the first and "visage" in talking of the second. If the reference of both to Kaufmann's *dimmui demut* is kept in mind, the unity of his thesis will hopefully be clearer to the reader.

ism was not in Israel but in Egypt or Babylonia. The monotheistic doctrine could only be born in a place where a highly developed polytheism existed, where polytheism could no longer satisfy the needs of developing thought. It could not be born amidst tribes of shepherds and tillers of the soil but in a place where there was high culture, where "the spirit of man labored to adapt the conclusions of highly developed science to all the phenomena of the world." From there, monotheism was exported to Israel.[1] According to this view, one should thus see monotheism as the legacy of a mature pagan culture. This legacy came over time to assume a special form in Israel, but its source was in Near Eastern pagan science, in the speculations of Babylonian and Egyptian priests, in monotheistic currents that were present in the ancient pagan world.

But the dominant school in biblical studies sensed the absurdity of this solution and tried to solve the problem in another way. The general tendency of these attempts among biblical scholars can be formulated thus: Biblical scholarship sought to solve the question *by transferring biblical monotheism from the cosmological realm to the realm of historical and ethical thought*. Biblical monotheism proceeded not from a new religious view of the cosmos but from a new religious ethical conception; not from considering the relation between God and the world but from considering the relation between God and humanity. The biblical YHWH was originally not the sole God of the world but a national God. Biblical monotheism was born of the special relation between this God and the people, out of national history and social morality. Its root was not "metaphysical" but social, historical, and ethical. It developed gradually by expanding the domain of the national God in the wake of political transformations that Israel underwent from the upheavals of the period of destruction of the Ephraimite and Judean monarchies. At first, YHWH was a god among other gods; later, the greatest god among the gods; still later, unique among the gods on account of his moral and holy character; and finally, the God of all nations and creator of the world. The expansion of the historical domain preceded the idea of cosmic unity. This monotheistic faith therefore did not proceed from metaphysical inquiry, nor did it require a rubric of conceptual scientific culture. It proceeded from emotion: from sensing the uniqueness—social, ethical, or religious—of one of the gods, or some special intensity in the hearts of this god's adherents; out of this feeling, this god was enthroned over the entire world.[2]

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1 See Zimmern and Winkler, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament* (1903), 208–9. Compare above [Editor's note: in *Toledot*]: "The Study of the History of Israelite Religion," 3, n. 4.

2 See chapter cited above [Editor's note: in *Toledot*], "The Study of the History of Israelite Religion," 5ff. It is possible to say that biblical scholarship generally followed the path outlined by Spinoza, who was one of the fathers of biblical criticism, and in a certain respect David Hume, even though Hume did not directly influence this scholarship.

But these solutions do not really solve our problem, and they are based on incorrect historical assumptions. The overwhelming majority of scholars have already recognized that biblical monotheism does not originate from the speculations of Babylonian and Egyptian priests. The "monotheistic" speculations that we find here and there in Babylonia and Egypt have a tendency to conceive of a mysterious identity amid the multiple images of divinity. But biblical religion has no mystical tendency, nor any unity arising out of multiplicity; it is absolute unity. Aside from this, the Bible contains no mention of this supposed connection with the higher speculations of Babylonia and Egypt. The view that the adherents of faith in YHWH were opposed only to the "mythological anthropomorphisms" of paganism but not to the "higher content" of the Near Eastern worldview, to which this faith was "integrally connected," has no basis.[3] The Bible fought furiously against all paganism. It also mocks pagan "wisdom" and makes no distinc-

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In his book *Theological-Political Treatise* (chap. 2 and especially chap. 13), Spinoza emphasized that the Bible depicts God in corporeal terms and does not employ abstract philosophical terms. The prophets experience visions through the power of the imagination but do not devise a system of theoretical concepts. Spinoza expresses the view that according to biblical faith ethical action is the main objective, not true philosophical knowledge. The biblical God revealed His moral attributes (merciful and gracious) and requires that people should emulate Him, but the Bible does not require that people have correct concepts, nor does it regard intellectual error as sin. Biblical faith was given to the popular masses, and its objective was to teach them ethical virtues and proper behavior, not a philosophical system. (This view, which has a root in Maimonides's outlook concerning the practical ethical objective of Israelite religion, had a certain influence on Samuel David Luzzatto, who nevertheless was an energetic opponent of both Spinoza and Maimonides.) Spinoza's outlook was a cornerstone of biblical scholarship, which however gave it another direction and sought to explain the monotheistic idea itself on an ethical historical basis. As for Hume, in his book *The Natural History of Religion* (1757), part 6, he seeks to give an empirical historical explanation for the emergence of Israelite monotheism. He finds here an example of the enthronement of one god over other gods and his ascent to the rank of chief of the gods. Other causes can bring about that one god, who belongs to the entourage of gods of the same pantheon, rises over his fellows and becomes supreme god over them, while the other gods decline to the rank of servant spirits, angels, or saints. Thus the Roman Jupiter, after raping fair Europa and castrating his father, rose in rank to Optimus Maximus. Similarly, the "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," who at one time was walking in the garden at the breeze of the day, rose to the rank of "*El Elyon*—God Supreme—or YHWH of the Jews." This outlook has been adopted as the foundation of biblical scholarship: the beginning of Israelite faith is belief in a national god, one god among the gods, who in time becomes the supreme God. The conception of the contributing causes has undergone considerable change, but the fundamental outlook remains the same. In the last generation, it led Delitzsch to create a stir in the world about the "great deception" whereby the Israelite prophets, acting out of racial pride, deceived the world into believing that the national God of Israel was the true God. See Friedrich Delitzsch, *Die große Täuschung* (Stuttgart/Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1920).

[3] See Alfred Jeremias, *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des alten Orients* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1916), 268–69.

tions within paganism. If the Bible had accepted esoteric doctrines from paganism, there would be no reason to hide the fact.[4]

However, the accepted view that biblical monotheism had a social, historical, or ethical source is insufficient to solve our problem. Let us reiterate what we said earlier, with another twist. The accepted view is only an artificial construction, a homiletical invention that combines things that have no natural connection of their own. We find in the Bible recognition of an ethical God, faith in the rule of justice and equity in the world. We find an attempt to explain Israelite history and world history on the basis of this recognition. We find in the Bible the belief in a single God who governs the world with justice. But to say that the faith in a single God *derives* from the belief in the rule of justice and ethics—that is an artificial invention that has no basis in truth. In the prophetic books these two ideas appear together. YHWH is both a single God and the God of justice and equity. There is no mention of the idea that God's unity is based on the ethical demand, which is its consequence. Similarly, there is no way to understand how the recognition that Israel's national God is single and exclusive proceeded from the ethical conception of history. The aspiration to an ethical understanding of the world does not by itself lead to monotheism. Ethical consciousness operated also within polytheism. The rule of the gods was conceived as the rule of justice and equity. In Persia, faith in the rule and victory of ethical good and an ethical, optimistic conception of the world's becoming was conceived on polytheistic assumptions. The prophets' opposition to the popular belief that YHWH would save them from all harm could have been expressed also on the basis of the view that justice rules in the realm of the gods and that the gods decided to punish Israel and other nations for their sins. Why weren't Israel and the other nations chastised for their misrepresentation of divinity, in the manner of the sages of Greece and Rome? Why did the prophetic indictment require monotheism and not merely a religious monarchism that placed YHWH at the head of the pantheon?[5] Ethical consciousness by itself does not serve as a natural bridge

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4 Indeed, the Bible tells of God-fearing people and prophets who were not Israelites: Adam, Noah, Melchizedek, Balaam, Job, and his friends. Moses receives instruction on setting up a judiciary from Jethro. But in all these stories the God-fearing gentiles are depicted as worshipping the God of Israel. At any rate, they do not appear as exemplars of pure paganism. In its depiction of paganism, the Bible makes no distinction between "mythological corporeal depictions" and "higher doctrines" but views them all together as foolishness and abomination.

5 In *Königtum Gottes* (The Kingdom of God, Berlin: Schocken, 1932), Martin Buber seeks to explain Israelite monotheism as proceeding from the unique religious feeling of the believers in the God-King YHWH, demanding absolute faith and absolute personal devotion without condition and without limitation. In this faith, nothing was added to the Semitic faith in a God-King except for the absolute demand and absolute subordination of the human "I" to the divine "Thou" (91, 93ff., 99ff., 149, 153, etc.). Out of this demand was born the ancient "kingdom of God" that sought to subordinate one and all to the God-King (106ff., etc.). But how we get from here to the view that there is *one* God,

from polytheism to monotheism. At any rate, there would be place here for gropings and hesitations. However, in the prophetic books there are no gropings or hesitations. Monotheism is visibly present and self-evident, and there is no hint that it is a new idea.

Later we shall set forth in detail our critique of the accepted view concerning the emergence of Israelite monotheism. We point out here the mistaken historical assumptions on which that view is based.

The accepted view assumes that absolute monotheism was born in the period of literary prophecy, in the same period that conceived of the primacy of ethics. For this reason, it was misled into making monotheism dependent on this doctrine and artificially sought to find a connection between them. But the assumption itself is incorrect. For in the Torah we do not find the idea of the primacy of ethics, but the idea of monotheism is absolutely dominant in it. The Torah is much more ancient than the prophetic literature, as we have seen, and for the most part it was formulated prior to the trauma of the destruction. The idea of God's unity is thus not a consequence of prophetic moral consciousness or of the national experiences in the period of the destruction. The proponents of the accepted view also assumed that one can find in the Bible traces of a merely national stage of the belief in YHWH and that YHWH of popular belief was merely a national god. We shall deal with this assumption below, and we shall see that in fact there is no evidence of such a stage, and that the belief in YHWH contained an element of cosmic monotheism from the outset. In the ancient song of Deborah and in the ancient creation legends, YHWH is a single God, and there is no tension between him and any other god. In the song of Deborah he is one in playing a national role, and in the creation legends he is one in playing cosmic, transnational roles. In both the song of Deborah and the creation legends, YHWH rules the world alone, and there is no other god with him (or against him!). God's unity is the primal idea, not God's ethical character or historical activity. In biblical monotheism, the cosmic element is fundamental. We must seek its root precisely in God's relation with the world as expressed in the creation legends. Monotheism in its very essence is rooted in this conception.

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who is the Creator and Ruler, is not explained. An especially intense feeling of relation of the human "I" toward the divine "Thou" is possible in itself to find satisfaction also in polytheism. Indeed, paganism knew great personal devotion to its deity, which led its worshippers to self-flagellation and castration or to forgoing the life of this world. Strength of feeling sought embodiment also in henotheism, elevating each god over his peers for his appointed time. Indeed, the absolute demand of biblical faith *insists* on the view that YHWH is God and there is none other. The unity of God is the *first* assumption, and only on its basis can we explain the absolute demand. Buber's attempt to explain the divine unity on the basis of a special relation between the believer and his God is only one version of the dominant outlook in today's biblical scholarship.

Moreover, our question is not truly a question of genetic origin and formation. It encompasses the entire history of the Israelite religion, even its later periods. It is not only a question of "In what time and from what background was the monotheistic idea born?" but also "How was this idea understood, and how did it develop and operate without a theoretical metaphysical formulation?" If monotheism is bound up with the idea of first cause, substance, infinity, supra-sensibility, and the like, is it proper to speak of monotheism in the absence of these metaphysical concepts? Can there be true monotheism where there is no abstract metaphysical conception of divinity? How can we explain the phenomenon that a religion proclaims God's unity and fights for it with unbounded strength of spirit, deploying its weapons against paganism (with all its logic and abstractions) while it itself has not arrived at an abstract stage of conceiving God that would seem at first sight to be a prerequisite for monotheism?

For we should not think that the concrete depictions of God (anthropomorphisms) in the Bible are only remnants of folk legend or poetic figures of speech with only a symbolic intention, as later philosophers interpreted them.* The entire biblical literature, without distinction of source or stratum, envisages a visage of God and does not regard this as a defect. The Bible has no abstract God-concept, nor does it have any drive to abstraction. Moreover, one can say that throughout Jewish literature, up to the point that Greek influence started to operate in it, there is no sense of defect in envisaging a visage of God. The same applies to original Judeo-Christian

* Translator's note: *Hagshamah* in this essay is alternately rendered "corporeal depiction" and "anthropomorphism." Just as there is a problem in rendering *hafshatah* (abstraction/incorporeality), so there is a parallel problem in rendering *hagshamah* (corporealization, anthropomorphism). Each is due to the same root problem, namely, that the Hebrew language did not develop vocabulary for discussing abstract philosophical issues until the medieval period, and then coined those terms on the basis of word-roots with a concrete signification. Maimonides famously framed the issue of *hagshamah* in terms of the issue whether God is corporeal. However, the Greek philosopher Xenophanes had already criticized the tendency of mythic religion to portray the gods as reflections of their human authors, and it is clear from some of the rabbinic material that Kaufmann cites that the rabbis were sensitive to this dimension of the problem. (See n. 20, citing the rabbinic dictum: "Great is the presumption of the prophets, that they compare the image of power of the Supernal One to the form of a human.") Without a doubt, the issue of divine-human resemblance in personal aspects ("anthropomorphism" in the inner sense, expressed in the idea of the human being created in the divine image, and correlation of the human will with the divine will) is central to biblical authors' conception of the divine-human moral drama, whereas the question whether God therefore had a material aspect was peripheral to their concerns. As a result—and as Kaufmann masterfully demonstrates in this essay—the biblical and rabbinic depictions of God often naively incorporate material aspects that were embarrassing to medieval Jewish thinkers schooled in the refinements of Greek metaphysical speculation. In the examples Kaufmann cites, sometimes the material aspect of God's representation is predominant and sometimes the personal or moral aspect. Accordingly, *hagshama* will be rendered variably "corporeality/corporeal representation" or "anthropomorphism" to fit the various contexts.

literature and to the original literature of Islam, which is a pristine embodiment of monotheism.

Israelite religion vanquished the corporeal depiction of God in one basic and decisive respect: it depicted God as outside every connection with the material of the world. God has no material quality, and He transcends material nature. God is spirit, not flesh (see Isa. 31:3). He is not a body. Moreover, it depicted Him as above all connection to the laws of the world, to nature, to the stars, to fate. This is the point of departure between Israelite religion and paganism; from this point, it ascended to its own unique sphere. Its God is above mythology and above nature; that is its fundamental idea. As we shall expound this issue in detail later, this idea is imprinted in the *entire* being of Israelite religion and woven into its entire tapestry. For that reason, we are entitled to view each corporeal depiction that offends this idea of God's transcendence and non-materiality as an innocent poetic survival, a symbol, or an archaic remnant.

But the Israelite religion did not overcome imagistic depiction, nor did it arrive at metaphysical abstraction. In its metaphysical innocence it offers imagistic depictions of God and does not sense that this is at all problematic. There is of course a difference between the periods and the various literary creations. But there are images common to all the periods of original Judaism, as similarly there are to original Christianity and original Islam. God's heavenly tabernacle, the supernal palace, the throne, the chariot, the human visage, the voice, the heavenly entourage—there is no sense of defect or diminution of the divine image in these images, and they are prevalent throughout the whole literature.

In the depictions of God in the Bible there are differences among the sources. The JE narratives are poetic and richly colored, while those of P are pale and dry. The depictions of JE are thus more vivid. But even in P, with its spiritual and reflective cast, we find the same images in all their innocence. In P we find the view that man was created in the divine image (Gen. 1:26–27; 5:1; 9:6). This figure has decisive value for our topic, and it is more instructive than many of the poetic figures in the Bible.[6] Moreover,

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[6] Also among the more recent commentators there are some who think that "divine image" refers to man's intellectual faculty. See Holzinger in his commentary to Genesis 1:26, citing evidence from the end of the verse, "and he shall have supremacy over the fish of the sea, etc." The purpose of creation in God's image is to rule over the world, and this is a spiritual attribute. See also 9:6: it is forbidden to kill a human being because he possesses a divine quality. But from the end of this verse we learn only this—that being created in the divine image includes *also* a spiritual quality. In 9:5–6 man's creation in the divine image imposes an obligation also on the animals ("I will require his blood also from every animal") and the animal does not discern this spiritual quality. See also 5:3, where the reference is necessarily to both a physical and a spiritual image. The Midrash also interpreted this as "image in the tangible sense"; see especially Rashi on these verses. (See also n. 25 below.) Gunkel in his *Commentary on Genesis* (112) concedes

belief in revelation occupies a more central place in biblical religion than in any other religion,[7] and this belief is bound up innocently with the specific imagery and localization of the divine presence. Revelation of God in the Bible is integrally connected with seeing God's appearance through vision and hearing God's voice. In some cases God reveals Himself to a person while awake and is seen through the human eye, whereas in other cases God appears in a vision or a dream. God appeared to the prophets in a vision or dream (Num. 12:6). But in ancient times God appeared to people in a waking state and spoke to them. On Mount Sinai God appeared in fire to all the Israelites, and in the wilderness He appeared to them in His cloud. These stories presuppose that God has a visual appearance. To be sure, the Bible wraps the manifestations of God in clouds of mystery. There is no fixed image; rather, there are diverse images. God appears as a king seated on his throne, as a warrior (Isa. 27:1; 31:4; 34:5ff.; 42:13; 63:1–6; Zech. 14:3, etc.), as a white-haired old man (Dan. 7:9), as a wanderer with a walking-stick (Judg. 6:11–21), and more. It appears that ancient biblical lore already sought to stress that these images of God are only appearances and visions, and for this reason we find in several tales that God and the angel appear interchangeably. In these tales the angel is no mere messenger but an apparition of God, a visible emanation manifested to the person.[8] In other tales the glory (*kavod*) of God appears to the viewer, and this is usually a majestic radiance without a shape. But even this representation suggests a local concentration of the divine presence. Aside from this, we find that Moses requested of God that He show him His divine glory (Ex. 33:18), and the meaning here is vision of a divine visage, as is apparent from the reply, "You cannot see My face…but you will see My back; however, My face will not be seen" (Exod. 33:20, 23). The assumption of this story is that there is a divine visage, but that no creature is allowed to view its majestic splendor. Implicit in biblical man's fear of seeing God—expressing his fear of the exalted—is the faith that there is a divine appearance that is capable of being seen. Contrasting with Exodus 33:18–23, it

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that one should here understand these matters in the plain sense, but he is of the opinion that at a later time the tendency to abstraction increased and that in the New Testament this tendency is dominant. In fact, this is not the case, as we shall see later. Against the plain sense interpretation of these texts, see Jacob, *Das erste Buch der Tora* (1934), on Genesis 1:26.

7 See my later chapter: "The Israelite Faith—Prophecy." [Editor's note: a crossreference within *Toledot*.]

8 See Gen. 16:7–13; 18–19; 21:17–18; 22:11–14; 48:15–16; Judg. 6:11–24. In these stories the "angel" suddenly acts as God himself or speaks as God in the first person. See especially Gen. 18–19: God appears alternately in the guise of three men or three angels. There is no reason to assume later "redaction" here (see Gunkel in his commentary to Genesis), for imperfect "redaction" such as this fixes nothing and seems purposeless.

says in Exodus 33:11 that God spoke "face to face" with Moses, and it says in Numbers 12:8: "He views the likeness of YHWH."[9]

Nor do we find the idea of divine incorporeality among the prophets. In the prophets' conception God is righteous and holy, exalted and sublime, one and all-powerful, but they do not ascribe to Him the attribute of incorporeality. Prophecy is entirely rooted in the popular faith of revelation, and therefore ascription of a visual appearance to God is basic to a certain extent. The prophets see God in a vision and hear God's voice. In their vision, they see God as "standing," "seated on a throne," "riding on a cloud," borne on "the *ḥayya*/beast" (the *Ḥayyot* of the chariot), and the like. The style of the prophetic visions cannot be accounted for by the necessity of language or poetic figures of speech. The prophets see their visions in all innocence, and we find no hint in them that all of this is poetic imagination, not reality. Moreover, they do not propound the doctrine of divine incorporeality, nor do they battle against the imagery of popular folklore, as we find among the Greek philosophers.[10] In this respect, the prophets were as one with the popular belief. Philosophic Judaism, which accepted the doctrine of incorporeality, was able to explain this entire phenomenon only out of the assumption that the images that the prophets saw were no more than "created light," apparitions that God created in order to show to the prophets. But the prophets themselves offer no hint of this. The question of divine image and incorporeality is outside the domain of the biblical problematic.

For the great battle that the Bible fights against worship of graven images does not stem from an idea of incorporeality and has nothing in common with it, even though it is customary to connect the two. The Bible does not fight against the worship of graven images for the reason that God cannot be physically represented or that the physical representation may lead to conceptions that fall short of the divine essence. The Bible does not at all conceive of the graven images as *representations* of divinity but as *fetishes*. Worship of graven images is the worship of "wood and stone." We shall discuss later in detail the fetishistic account that the Bible gives of idol worship. But here we shall focus on the decisive fact regarding the question discussed in this chapter that the Bible never specifically addresses the worship of *representations of YHWH* but lumps it together with idol worship in general. The Bible never distinguishes between graven images of

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[9] See Exod. 33:20: "for no man can see Me *and live.*" This implies that seeing God is possible, but if one sees God, he will die. (Compare R. Dosa's interpretation of this verse in *Sifra* on Leviticus chapter 2, and *Sifre* end of *Beha'alotekha.*) Similarly, Moses fears to look at God and hides his face (Exod. 3:6). Compare Gen. 32:31, Deut. 4:33 and 5:21–23, Judg. 6:23–24, and 13:22–23. In addition, one should note that the belief that one who looks at a divinity will be struck down or die is to be found also in popular pagan belief. At any rate, this belief does not derive from the idea of divine incorporeality.

[10] See Diels, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (1922): Xenophanes §§ 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 23, 24; Heraclitus § 5; the Skeptics §§ 127, 128.

YHWH and graven images of pagan gods but includes them all in the category of "other gods." If it had conceived of graven images as *representations* of gods, this lumping together would not be possible. For by such a conception, there is a basic difference between the reason for prohibiting graven images of YHWH and those of other gods; the former would be prohibited because one may not represent YHWH, whereas the others are prohibited because they turn the worshippers' loyalty to the gods represented by them. At any rate, it is clear that only the war against graven images of YHWH, not the war on the graven images of other gods, can be explained on the basis of the notion of incorporeality. But if the Bible's war on the worship of graven images had derived from the same root as the idea of incorporeality, it would have had two different formulations in the Bible's exhortations and in its laws. But neither the Torah nor the prophets devote one kind of utterance against graven images of YHWH and another against graven images of other gods. In the classic prohibition of graven images in the Ten Commandments (in both versions), graven images and pictures are forbidden *after* the prohibition of other gods (Exod. 20:3–4, Deut. 5:7–8). The text does not say, "I am YHWH your God… Do not make for Me any graven image or picture… Do not have any other gods… Do not make a graven image or picture of them, etc." The comprehensive prohibition of graven images that comes after the prohibition of "other gods" can only be understood as a prohibition of the worship of fetishes, which are "other gods." The graven images do not represent gods but existing beings "in the heavens above and the earth beneath, etc." and the representations of these existing beings are themselves worshipped as "other gods." Thus you find that the calf, which was not made for the sake of any foreign god, is regarded as a sin, not because of the gross corporealization embodied in it but because it itself is considered "another god" as if to take the place of YHWH (Exod. 32:1, 4, 8; Ps. 106:20; Neh. 9:18; I Kings 12:28, 14:9; 2 Chr. 13:8). We find this conception also in the other prohibitions of graven and molten images in the Torah. Nor do the prophets specify in any place that they are speaking of worship of representations of YHWH, nor do they give a separate reason for its prohibition, but they chastise the people for worshipping graven images *in general* and only give one reason to this prohibition: it is the ignorant worship of "wood and stone."[11]

[11] Only in two places does the idea of incorporeality seem to come up as a reason for the prohibition of idols, and these places are customarily cited as biblical evidences for the idea of incorporeality (Saadia in *Book of Doctrines and Beliefs*, chap. 2, and Maimonides frequently cites them in polemical contexts). But the reason of divine incorporeality is not even expressed in these texts. In Deut. 4:12ff., the prohibition of idol worship is explained by the reason that the Israelites "did not see any shape [*temunah*]" from the fire at Mount Horeb. But if the text had intended to express the idea of divine incorporeality, it would not have limited its assertion to the expression that *no shape was seen at Mount Horeb,* but it would have said explicitly that God has no shape. From the contin-

In the biblical war against idol worship, a protest was indeed expressed against "corporealizing" the divinity. Namely, it is a protest against the faith that there is a divine dimension in matter and in its natural or artistic-magical forms, or that divinity is sown and planted in the world and its faces. This protest was expressed also in the war against the worship of the heavenly host. As we said earlier, biblical faith severed every connection between divinity and the material of the world. But the question of material corporealization is altogether different from the question of depicting [God] through imagery.

Nor do we find the idea of incorporeality in Second Temple Jewish literature. In Second Temple times, the Israelite conception of divinity tended more and more to transcendence. Reverence for the exalted surrounded the divinity with clouds of mystery and increased the distance and partitions between God and the creaturely world. One no longer spoke about God with simple innocence as in previous times. One felt ashamed now to say things that the old folklore felt no shame in saying. The role of the angels expanded. Where God had acted directly, the angels now acted as His emissaries and delegates. Language became more discriminating. One forbore to pronounce the divine name and began to resort to secondary and tertiary appellations of the divinity. The tendency of this process was to render God more remote from any contact with the material, to increase one's reverence for the exalted, and to increase beyond any limit the feeling of sanctity and mystery of the divine being. But in all these there was no tendency to a notion of divine incorporeality. The accepted imagery concerning God was not displaced. The depictions of God as having His abode in the heavens,

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uation it appears that the passage deals not with worship of YHWH through graven images but with worship of graven images in general as well as worship of the heavenly host. It includes all these in the general statement that YHWH apportioned these "to all other nations" (4:19; compare Deut. 29:15–28). Earlier (4:3) the worship of Baal Peor is mentioned. It is clear that one cannot say that the text seeks to forbid *graven images of the gods of the gentiles* for the reason that *YHWH is incorporeal.* Moreover, this portion does not deal with representation images but with fetishes (see especially verse 28), and it naively argues that there is no basis for worshipping any "shape" in the world, because the people saw no shape at Mount Horeb. The second place is Isaiah 40:18: "To whom shall you compare God? What likeness shall you arrange for Him?" Some see here a rational proof against worshipping graven images, and in effect against worshipping God through representational images. (See Duhm's commentary on this verse.) But from the continuation it is evident that the prophet is arguing against fetishism. (Understanding idolatry as fetishism is particularly clear in Second Isaiah.) The intention there is not to constructing an image of God but to comparing God to man-made gods, to any "image" or shape made by an artisan, with respect to their power and activity. This is evident from the parallel verses: "To whom can you compare Me, *and I will be equal?"* (40:25), and "To whom can you compare Me or declare Me similar? To whom can you liken Me, so that we seem comparable?" (46:5) And this is how the Hebrew commentators interpreted. For the use of the verbs *'arakh* and *damah*, compare Psalms 89:8(7) and Job 28:17, 19.

the palace, the throne, and the divine entourage were still the dominant images. God was regarded as sublime but not incorporeal.*

In the apocalyptic literature we find signs of a major transformation. In place of revelations of God, one finds revelations of angels. But the apocalyptic literature still depicts God with the imagery of the biblical lore. Its descriptions follow the visions of Ezekiel and Zechariah. In Daniel, in the Ethiopian Book of Enoch, in the Greek Apocalypse of Baruch, and in other apocalyptic books we find many-hued descriptions of firmaments, of the orders of heaven and celestial palaces, of the divine throne and those ministering before it, of the heavenly court, and much more. All these descriptions are the fruit of a creative imagination, and they are quite remote from any abstract notion of divine incorporeality.

We find this tendency to sublimity, but not incorporeality, in the Aramaic targumim (Targum Onkelos and Targum Jonathan) and in the Greek translations of the Bible (Septuagint, Symmachus, and Theodotion), as well as in the greater part of the lore of the Talmud and Midrash.

Later sources sensed detraction from the divine dignity in several naïve scriptural passages. The translations resorted to euphemistic expressions in rendering them. Instead of mentioning God, they substituted terms such as *memra* (word), *yikra* (glory), *Shekhinta* (divine presence), *deḥila* (reverence); other entities from the divine surroundings, such as angel, throne, glory; or *Makom* (place), "knot of tefillin," and the like. Saadia, Maimonides, and other adherents of a philosophical faith cited these variants of the Aramaic translations that had acquired a status of sanctity among the Jewish people and sought to prove from them that the ancients had intended to affirm the doctrine of divine incorporeality.[12] But it has been pointed out that the targumim also resort to imagery, and there are anthropomorphic expressions that they refrain from employing in one place but do not refrain from employing in another place. This phenomenon cannot be explained as a tendency to adopt divine incorporeality. To be sure, the Aramaic translations changed over the generations, and there are differences between one stratum and another, and between one book and another.[13] But if we wish to analyze the spirit of *the period* to the extent that it is expressed in the targumim, we should see this entire literature as one body and learn from all

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* Translator's note: "Sublime/sublimity"—Hebrew *hasgavah*, a key word here and throughout the remainder of the essay. Literally: "This is sublimity, not incorporeality" (*hasgavah hi ve-lo hafshatah*).

12 See Saadia, *Book of Doctrines and Beliefs*, chap. 2, argument "from the tradition"; and Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, 1:27ff.

13 See Ginsburger, *Die Anthropomorphismen in den Thargumim* (1891), especially 24ff., 38ff. Ginzburger explains the anthropomorphisms in the Targum to the Hagiographa (*partzufa*/"face," Ps. 34:17; *udna*/"ear," Ps. 10:17; *apoi*/"face," Job 13:8; *nehireih*/"nose," Job 4:9; *sifvatohi*/"lips," Job 11:5; and more) as reflecting the influence of the midrashic literature (43). But in the last analysis, one should view the targumim and midrashim as a single literature.

its strata. If we examine the targumim from this perspective, we see that in general they are close to the lore of the Talmud and Midrash, and that they share the same imagery.[14] They resort to euphemisms out of deference to the divine dignity and in order to avoid attributing anything uncomplimentary to God. But they have no inhibition concerning the basic imagery in which God is depicted.[15] The source of their changes is an aspiration to

[14] "In our image according to our likeness," Gen. 1:20 (and similarly 1:26, 5:1, 9:6) is translated by the Targumim of Onkelos and Jonathan (Ginsburger edition) in its plain sense. In 1:27 and 9:6 they change the language, perhaps in deference to divine dignity (see Geiger in his article *Tzelem Elohim*, appended to his book *Urschrift* [1928 edition], 14–17). But in Gen. 5:1 Jonathan translates *be-diyokna deH' 'avad yateh* ("in the image of the Lord He made him") not *be-diyokna H'* ("in the [human] image God made him") as in 9:6, and this spoils Geiger's generalization. In Gen. 3:8, Onkelos translates *vesham'u yat kal memreh deH' elohim demihalekh beginta* as "they heard the voice of the Word of the Lord God walking in the garden." But the entire description stands in place. The same applies to all the realism in Gen. 18. In Exod. 24:10–11, they add words for the sake of divine dignity: Onkelos: *yekar elaha deyisrael*, *uteḥot kurseh yekara* ("the glory of the God of Israel…and under His throne of glory"); Jonathan: *ikar elaha deyisrael, uteḥot apopodin derigloi demeyatza teḥot kurseh* ("the glory of the God of Israel…and under the footstool of His legs that they laid out under His throne," citing here the tale about a baby who was kneaded into a brick in Egypt, and they made the brick into a footstool in place of the hypopodion under the throne of the Master of the Universe). In Exod. 33:11, Jonathan adds, "Except that [Moses] would not see the radiance of [God's] face." But in Num. 12:8: "He sees the image behind the Shekhinah (Divine Presence)"; and Onkelos: "He beholds the image of the Lord's glory." In Exod. 33:22, Onkelos and Jonathan translate "My hand" as "My word" (*memri*), and in 33:23, Onkelos translates "My back" as "that which is behind Me," while Jonathan, following the aggadic midrash, translates "My back" as "the knot of God's tefillin." In Isa. 6:1 ["I beheld my Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, and the skirts of His robe filled the Temple"], Jonathan translates, "The glory (*yikra*) of the Lord rested on His throne…the Temple was filled with the radiance of His glory." And similarly in other places. See Judg. 6:11ff.; I Kings 22:19; Isa. 19:1, 40:22; Ezek. 1:26; Amos 9:1; Hab. 3:4; Job 1:6ff., 2:3; 42:5; Ps. 18:7, 10, 11, etc. In all these texts we see the same thing: a stringent fastidiousness not to treat God's glory as "profane" [i.e., ordinary], but any trace of philosophical abstraction is absent. From the standpoint of reverence before God's glory, there is a difference between [the biblical text's] "under God's legs" and [the Targum's] "under God's footstool," and similarly in the other passages. But from the standpoint of the doctrine of God's incorporeality, there is no difference. As for Maimonides's view that Onkelos and Jonathan translated as they did in order to avoid corporeality, Naḥmanides subjected it to severe criticism; see his commentary on Gen. 46:4. Naḥmanides shows that in many places the translators had no inhibitions about corporeal depictions, and he tries to explain their method in his way. See also Isaac Arama's *ʿAkedat Yitzḥak*, § 31.

[15] God's abode in heaven, the throne, the palace, the entourage, and the like are treated literally by the translators and are given no philosophical meaning, and this is decisive. For the basis of the whole philosophical conception of the method of the Targumim, as articulated by Saadia, Maimonides, and their circle is the assumption that Shekhinah (Divine Presence) and the Kavod (Divine Glory) sitting on the throne are a "created light" or "created form" (Saadia, *Book of Doctrines and Beliefs*, chap. 2; Maimonides, *Guide* 1:27–28) or that "Throne" is a euphemism for the heavens (*Guide* 1:9, 28). But this is not how Onkelos and Jonathan conceive them. For according to the plain under-

sublimity, not incorporeality. Only from such considerations can we explain why they departed from the literal sense in some places and not in others.[16]

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standing of their language, *shekhinah* and *kavod* are an emanated light, the emanation of the light proceeding from God himself, simulacra of God, and they are honorific appellations for God himself. The throne is not heaven, but it resides in heaven, where the supernal palace exists. The throne is often associated with *shekhinah* or *kavod* but not always, as Maimonides seems to think (*Guide* 1:28). It is sometimes associated with God himself, and this suggests that this is the true state of affairs. Moreover, sometimes the translators add to the text their own words of explanation, showing that in their conception the image, the palace, and the throne are to be taken literally. Jonathan translates Job 26:9 as follows: "He closes off His throne with darkness, so that the angels shall not look upon Him; He spreads a curtain over the clouds of His glory." Here the throne, the curtain, and the object of "look upon Him" refer to God, who is the subject of the entire chapter. Were it not for the darkness, the curtains, and the cloud, the angels would see what they would see [i.e., God himself]. In Ps. 9:5: "You sit on a throne, righteous judge!" Ps. 93:2: "Your throne is established from prior times." Ps. 103:19: "He sets His throne in the heavenly heights." In all these verses the throne is associated in the Targum with God himself, and He dwells in heaven (compare Isa. 6:1, 6). We have previously cited Jonathan's expression, "the footstool of the Master of the Universe." In Ps. 104:3, Jonathan mentions God's *exedra* (parlor). In Ps. 91:1, "In the shadow of the clouds of the glory of Shaddai H/he dwells," the subject is God. According to Maimonides (*Guide* 1:28), the "pavement of sapphire" (Ex. 24:10) is the primal matter of the universe, whereas according to Jonathan, in the legend we cited above, it is an actual brick. The angels' wings in Isa. 6:2 are explained philosophically by Maimonides (*Guide* 1:43), whereas Jonathan translates, "so that he not see [God]." Compare Job 42:5: "But now my eyes have seen You." "Hand" and "arm" are translated "stroke of His power," but in many places, where acts of beneficence are the topic, they are translated literally (see Exod. 6:6, 15:6, 12, 17; Isa. 40:10, 62:8; Ps. 89:11, 14; Job 26:13; and more). Maimonides sensed the difference between his own stance and that of the translators: when he said that Onkelos only contented himself with avoiding divine corporeality but did not explain the higher meaning of the parables (1:28); or in his objections to several of the translations of Onkelos for the verb *ra'ah* (see) in relation to God (1:48). Naḥmanides rightly wrote concerning the use of the words *shekhinah* and *kavod* in the language of the Targumim: "God forbid that there be something called *shekhinah* or *kavod* other than referring to the honored and blessed God! Thus Onkelos translates 'If Your face not travel with us' as 'if Your *shekhinah* not travel among us'" (Naḥmanides on Gen. 46:4—see the rest of his comment).

[16] In his work *Oheb Ger*, Samuel David Luzzatto established a principle that the Targum was not written for the learned and did not intend to remove corporeal depictions, but was written for "ordinary people" in order "to remove a stumbling block from the masses and proselytes," so that study of the Torah should not lead them to think gross thoughts or to mockery and derision against sacred matters. Therefore, it changed certain words that would have "a base connotation to the common people" (such as the expression "under [God's] legs") but had no problem with using "dignified figures of speech" (such as "the throne of God's glory") even though they too spoke of divine matters in materialistic terms. From our perspective, we may say that Luzzatto's principle is basically sound. The Targumim generally employ euphemisms only for propriety's sake. But there is no evidence that they wrote only for "ordinary people." If truth be told, their aspiration to sublimity stemmed from their religious consciousness, but it had no philosophical source. Everything that we say here about the Aramaic translations applies also

We see a greater deviation from divine incorporeality in the tales and homilies of the rabbis than in the targumim. The Sages of the Oral Torah resort to various appellations of divinity out of respect: the Holy and Blessed One, the *shekhinah* (Divine Presence), the *gevurah* (Divine Power), Heaven, *makom* (Place—the Omnipresent), Master of the Universe, the All-Merciful, and the like. In this respect the Oral Torah continues the method of the targumim. Similarly, the Sages sense detraction from the divine dignity in some of the tales and literary figures of the Bible. In the generation of the Scribes, they amended several scriptural passages out of deference to the divine dignity (*tikkunei soferim*—the emendations of the Scribes). They said of several corporeal references that the text came only "to accommodate the ear in terms of what it can understand." Similarly they would introduce anthropomorphic parables with the expression *kiv'yakhol*—"as if it were possible," to suggest that one should not understand them literally. In interpreting some biblical texts, they resorted to homiletic explanations in order to downplay anthropomorphism. But all these serve to render the conception of God more sublime, not to strive for a philosophical notion of incorporeality. On the contrary, the rabbinic lore indulges extensively in imagery, and the rabbis' anthropomorphic depictions of God were no less problematic than the biblical lore for proponents of philosophical interpretation, even more so.

All of the scribal emendations sought to revise passages in Scripture that tended to derogate from the divine dignity, but none of them sought to eliminate imagery.[17] The scriptural figures of speech that the rabbis said

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to the Septuagint. Among the scholars were some who sought to find in the Septuagint traces of the influence of Greek philosophy (Dähne, Gfrörer, Michaelis). But Frankel and Zeller already knew that this was not the case. See especially Frankel, *Vorstudien zur Septuaginta* (1841), 174–79; and *Über den Einfluss der palästinischen Exegese auf die alexandrinische Exegese* (1851), 21ff. Frankel demonstrated that the Septuagint was influenced by the methods of interpretation of the sages of Eretz Israel and that in its avoidance of corporeal depictions it was influenced by them, not by Greek philosophers. Indeed, the method of the Septuagint in general is identical with that of the Aramaic Targumim. They use euphemisms for the sake of propriety, but not in order to conform to the idea of God's incorporeality. They translated "in Our image, according to Our likeness" in Gen. 1:26 (and also 1:27; 5:1; 9:6) literally. In Exod. 24:10–11, they translated "the place of the God of Israel" and "that which was under His feet." In Ex. 33:22–23, they translated "My hand" literally; for "My back" they substituted "that which is behind Me." In Isa. 6:1, they translated "YHWH sitting upon a throne high and exalted" literally, while rendering "His skirts filled the Temple" as "The house was filled with His glory," and similarly in other places. One should only restrict Frankel's verdict in the sense that the variations of corporeal expressions are not connected at all with philosophical interpretation. It is obvious that they are not the fruit of Persian influence (*Einfluss*, 31–32). On the question of the influence of Greek philosophy on the Septuagint, see Freudenthal, *Jewish Quarterly Review* (1890): 205–22.

[17] See *Mekilta, Beshalah—Shira*, § 6; *Yalkut, Beshalah,* § 247; *Tanhuma, Beshalah,* § 16; "the apple of his eye" (Zech. 2:12) instead of "the apple of My eye"; and "you have

were "to accommodate the ear" also involved restriction of the divine power, such as "like the smoke of the furnace" (Exod. 19:18), "the lion has roared; the Lord YHWH has spoken" (Amos 3:8), "His voice is like the voice of many waters" (Ezek. 43:2), and the like.[18] Similarly, where the rabbis used the qualification *kiv'yakhol* ("as if it were possible"), this was to avoid not imagery but the restriction of God's power or the impugning of God's dignity.[19] Similarly, when they said, "Great is the power of the prophets, that they compare the creature to its Creator," they were referring not to the fact of the comparison itself but to the indignity of comparing God to a human being.[20] Similarly, when Rabbi Ishmael tries to play down

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sniffed at it" (Mal. 1:13) instead of "you have sniffed at Me"; and similarly with other "scribal emendations."

18 *Mekilta, Jethro–Bahodesh*, § 4. Compare *Avot de-Rabbi Natan*, § 2: "Not like a single hero, but like all the heroes in the world; not like a single lion, but like all the lions in the world."

19 For example: "['Your right hand, O YHWH' is repeated twice. When Israel perform God's will, they make the left into right; when Israel do not perform God's will,] *kiv'yakhol*—as if it were possible, they make [God's] right hand into left [as it is written: 'He has turned back His right hand' (Lam. 2:5). When Israel perform God's will there is no sleep before Him, as it says, 'Behold, He who guards Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.' (Ps. 121:4) When Israel do not perform His will,] *kiv'yakhol*—as if it were possible, there is slumber before Him, [i.e., God sleeps, as it is said, 'The Lord awakes as from sleep' (Ps. 78:65)]." (*Mekilta Beshalah–Shira*, § 5) Also: "*Kiv'yakhol*—as if it were possible, that the wings of the holy *Ḥayyot* were diminished" (*b. Ḥag.* 13b). And: "*Kiv'yakhol*—as if it were possible, the heavenly entourage were diminished" (ibid.). And: "[A grievous statement did the spies make when they said, *ki ḥazak hu mimenu*—for the inhabitants of the land are stronger than us. Understand *mimenu* not as 'than us' but as 'than Him']—*Kiv'yakhol*—as if it were possible, even the Master of the House cannot remove his furniture from there" (*b. Men.* 53b). And many similar places.

20 See *Gen. Rab.*, 27:1, the saying of Rabbi Yudan. Maimonides cites this saying in *Guide*, 1:46. But when we examine his source, we see that it is not talking about divine incorporeality. This midrash is cited in connection with the verse, "There is a man whose labor was with wisdom" (Eccl. 2:21), interpreting the "man" in the verse as referring to God, and citing as proof-texts: "I heard the voice of a man" (Dan. 8:16), "A likeness like the appearance of a man" (Ezek. 1:26). In the continuation of this midrash the meaning of the saying "Great is the power of the prophets" can only be that they dared to compare the voice of God and His appearance to the voice and appearance of a human being. In *Numbers Rabbah*, chap. 19 (compare *Tanhuma Hukkat*, § 6), the saying reappears in a midrash on the verse "A man's wisdom will enlighten his face" (Eccles. 8:1), where again they interpret the "man" in the verse as referring to God. There, Rabbi Yudan says, "Great is the power of the prophets, that they compare *the image of power of the Supernal One* to the form of a human." See *Gen. Rab.*, 24:1, on Isa. 29:16: "Should the potter be accounted as the clay? [Should what is made say of its Maker, 'He did not make me'?]"—"They compare the creature to its creator, the planting to the planter." Rashi comments, "They compare the terrestrial eye [i.e., form] to the celestial eye." It is clear that the intent is to compare status and rank. Maimonides (*Guide* 1:26) cites also the talmudic saying: "The Torah speaks in human language" (*Sifre Shalah* on the verse *hikkaret tikkaret*, Num. 15:31; see also *b. Keritot*, 11a, and other places) in order to prove that the rabbis implied affirmation of the doctrine of incorporeality (and this saying was interpreted to mean this already before Maimonides; see Bacher, *Aggadat Ha-*

the oddness of the verse "I will see the blood" (Exod. 12:13), this is only because of the reason, "Is not everything visible to Him?"[21] In this homily and all other homilies of this genre, which seek to avoid anthropomorphism, sublimity is expressed but not incorporeality.

In any case, we can determine the character of the Talmudic-midrashic lore not only from isolated expressions but from the totality of the images dominant in it. The legends describe God as a great, awesome King, who has his majestic abode in the heavens on His throne of glory, amid endless radiance, among the heavenly entourage, behind the curtain, at the head of the court, issuing and sealing decrees concerning all the inhabitants of the world, attired in tefillin, studying Torah, and the like. There are anthropomorphic legends at the level of popular or folk discourse, and these legends caused great confusion among the adherents of refined faith.[22] But we find the basic imagery also in those tales that are like "fine silk" and that contain exalted views transmitted in the name of the leading rabbis. The depiction of God in these legends is exalted and sublime. God is righteous, loving, and merciful. His demand of human beings consists of piety and love of humankind. This lore raises God to the most sublime level, exalts Him over everything in the world, and dismisses all defects and restrictions of His power. But it knows nothing of divine incorporeality.[23] It understands the creation of humanity in the divine image in a spiritual sense and bases the moral standing of the human being on it.[24] But it does not displace the lit-

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Tannaim, 1:2:5, n. 6). But Geiger and Reggio have already demonstrated that in talmudic literature they used this expression only as a hermeneutic method in halakhic midrash [to refrain from deducing laws from duplications of phraseology and similar stylistic features of the text]. (See *Otzar Neḥmad* 1 (5616/1856): 125–27, 159–60, and Bacher, *Aggadat Ha-Tannaim*, 4–5.)

21 *Mekilta Bo*, § 7. Compare Isaac Hirsch Weiss, *Dor Dor veDorshav*, pt. 1, 216ff. Weiss also fails to distinguish between sublimity and incorporeality.

22 See Nachman Krochmal, *More Nevukhei ha-Zeman,* § 14, "The Aggada and the Aggadists." Krochmal seeks to prove that the corrupted aggadot are not the words of the Sages and were accidentally commingled with the Talmud and midrashic compilations.

23 This observation applies even to the most abstract saying that we find in the rabbinic lore: "[Why is God called Makom (place)?] Because God is the place of the world, but the world is not the place of God" (*Gen. Rab*., 68:10, on Gen. 28:11: "And [Jacob] came upon the place." Compare the version in *Yalkut*, § 117). This saying, too, affirms sublimity but not incorporeality, as it does not divest God of spatiality in the philosophic sense. It affirms that everything is dependent on God. We learn this from the parable that is mentioned there: "It is like a hero who was riding on a horse. The horse is secondary to the rider, but the rider is not secondary to the horse."

24 See *Gen. Rab.*, 8:12, the saying of Rabbi Jacob from Kefar Hanin, who distinguishes between the righteous who are "in Our image according to Our likeness" and the wicked who are not "in Our image according to Our likeness." Compare the saying of Rabbi Akiva: "Dear is mankind, who was created in the Image" (*m. Avot*, 3:14). Compare also the saying of Rabbi Tanhuma concerning one who despises a person: "Know whom you despise—he was made in God's likeness" (*Gen. Rab.* 24:8).

eral meaning of creation in the divine image.[25] Sometimes it exaggerates and says that even the ministering angels cannot see the supernal image.[26]

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[25] Some examples of taking "divine image" in the literal sense: Hillel would wash his body for the honor of his Maker, because he was created in His image. He cited the parable of "the icons of kings," which were scrubbed and rinsed (*Lev. Rab*., 34:3). Whoever does not engage in procreation "diminishes the divine likeness" (*Gen. Rab*., 34:2). When Adam was created, "the ministering angels erred and sought to recite 'Holy' before him" (*Gen. Rab*., 8:9; Rashi: "They erred and thought that he was the *Shekhinah* because he was created in the divine image"). On the verse "For the hanged man is the curse of God" (Deut. 21:23), Rabbi Meir told a parable: "It is like twin brothers, one was the king, the other was a robber" (*Tosef. Sanh*., § 9; *b. Sanh*., 46b). In a *baraita*, we learn: "All faces are permitted except for the face of a person," and they derived it from the verse, "You shall not make with Me [gods of silver and gods of gold]" (Exod. 20:23), which may be read, "You shall not make Me" (*b. AZ*, 43a–b, *b. RH*, 24a). In *Midrash Eleh Ezkerah* (ver. 1), it is said of Rabbi Ishmael the High Priest that the splendor of his face was similar to the splendor of the face of his Maker (Eisenstein, *Otzar Midrashim*, 440; in versions 2 and 3, the text reads, "the splendor of his face was similar to that of Metatron"). In the wedding blessings we find, "Who created the human being in His image, in the image of His likeness and form" (*b. Ket.*, 8a; on the word *tavnit*, "form," see Maimonides, *Guide*, 1:3). To be sure, the verses speaking of the creation in the divine image gave rise in customary fashion to different homiletic meanings. In keeping with the tenor of the Greek translation of Symmachus—and in part with that of the Aramaic translation of Jonathan—they interpreted "in his image" as "in man's image: whole and perfect." They deduced from this that Adam was created circumcised (*Avot de-Rabbi Natan*, *B*). See the homily of Rabbi Simlai on "in Our image according to Our likeness" (*Gen. Rab*., 5:8). But these midrashim did not seek to exclude the plain meaning of the text. Most characteristic is the interpretation of Rashi, who expresses nicely the spirit of the aggadic midrashim [by combining the human and divine "images"]. He interprets Gen. 1:27, "in his image," as "in the mold made for him" (in other words, in the human image), but "in the image of God He created him" he explains, "The image prepared for him was the image of the likeness of his Maker."

[26] On the verse "For man cannot see Me and live" (Ex. 33:20), they commented: "Even the holy *Ḥayyot* and ministering angels do not see the divine glory" (*Sifra Vayikra*, 2:11; *Sifre,* end of *Beha'alotekha*). But even this does not imply divine incorporeality, as Geiger opines (see *Urschrift,* 1928 ed., 341, and Hebrew appendix 7), but rather extreme sublimity. The context in the *Sifra* is discussing the *Ḥayyot* that bear the divine throne. This midrash is ascribed to Rabbi Akiva, who Geiger thinks is an adherent of divine incorporeality (ibid., 328, 341, Hebrew excurses, 4 and 7). But we know from other homilies of Rabbi Akiva that he was not an abstract thinker. His homily on Daniel 7:9: "When I looked, thrones were placed" is well known: "one for Him and one for David" (*b. Ḥag*., 14a, and see Weiss, *Dor Dor ve-Dorshav*, 2:117, 125, which seeks to explain Rabbi Akiva's tendency toward anthropomorphism). Even Rabbi Yose the Galilean, who was critical of Rabbi Akiva, was critical only because "he spoke of the Shekhinah in profane terms'" (*b. Ḥag*., 14a; Rashi comments, "To seat a human being by God's side"). This is an expression that nicely symbolizes the aspiration to sublimity of the entire Talmudic-midrashic lore. For an understanding of the nature and intent of midrashim in this vein, which Rabbi Akiva preached on the verse "No man can see Me and live," we should take note of the legend in praise of Moses, in which the angels have not seen and do not know the place where God resides, whereas Moses speaks with God face to face; Moses sees God's form and enters into the sanctum where the ministering

But even this passage attests to an imagistic conception of God. The question of reconciling the divine image with incorporeality is at any rate outside the purview of this entire literature.

The question of the divine image was in fact raised only in the border zone where Judaism came into contact with *Greek thought.*

Out of a desire to defend Judaism before the enlightened Greek public, the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Aristobulus explains the anthropomorphic expressions in the Torah allegorically, including among them the references to the divine face, feet, and hands, as well as references to divine movement and utterances.[27] Relying on the concepts of the Greek enlightenment, Philo of Alexandria sought to give the Torah an allegorical explanation, eliminating any trace of anthropomorphic or imagistic understanding.[28] These Hellenistic Jewish philosophers followed the example of the enlightened Greek and Roman thinkers, especially the Stoics, who interpreted the pagan myths allegorically. But the efforts of the Hellenistic Jews to clothe Judaism in philosophic garb bore no fruit. Greek philosophy had practically no influence on the primary stream of Judaism, its integral core, that is, Pharisaic Judaism, to which the decisive majority of the people adhered. The Talmudic-midrashic literature is the lineal descendant of biblical thought, adapted to the spirit of the times. It continues and deepens the biblical beliefs, but it does not occupy itself with philosophy. The "philosopher" as a character in rabbinic lore is not the adherent of a purified faith but a heretic who denies the Torah. "Pardes"* is regarded as a place fraught with danger. Motivated by a heightened and refined *religious* sensibility, the rabbinic literature strives to remove certain anthropomorphisms. But it

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angels have no permission to enter (*Yalkut Va'ethanan*, § 815). Here we have concealment and vision of God's form in one and the same legend.

27 See Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica*, 8:10, and Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi* (1907–1908), 3:513–14. Frankel (in *Einfluss*, 33, n. 9) opposes the view that Eichhorn expressed: that allegorical midrash sought to defend the Torah from the pagans' derision. But we should not understand this defense in such a narrow sense. We have here in operation the aspiration to clothe Judaism in an appropriate form in keeping with the concepts of the Greek enlightenment.

28 Josephus Flavius stands in the middle in a certain sense. He was raised in the popular faith, but he also had a superficial Greek education and writes in an eclectic style. God is eternal, and His essence is unknowable, but "He is exalted in His *beauty* over every perishable likeness" (*Against Apion*, 2:16). God is all, first and last, but "He is hidden from us in His form and His magnitude. No matter, even the most precious, is fit that God's form should be made from it. All artistry will fall short of fashioning the image of His likeness" (ibid., § 22). "The Jews say to Petronius that it is forbidden for them to set up *even the image of God*, much less the image of a human being" (*Wars of the Jews,* 2:10:4).

* Translator's note: "Pardes" (= Paradise): the "Garden" of religious speculation. "Our Rabbis taught: Four men entered Pardes, namely, Ben ʿAzzai and Ben Zoma, Aḥer, and R. Akiba. Ben Azzai looked and died; Ben Zoma looked and went mad; Aḥer mutilated the shoots; R. Akiba emerged in peace" (*b. Ḥag.* 14b).

contains no systematic philosophic inquiry, and it generates anthropomorphisms of its own. In the war that ensued between Judaism and paganism on another front, the Christian front, it is paganism that *attacks* Judaism for anthropomorphizing the divinity. The enlightened Greek thinkers deride the biblical stories, arguing that they display no correct conception of divinity or true knowledge of that which is exalted above any imagistic depiction. The Christian defense follows the lead of the Hellenistic Jewish thinkers, seeking to counter the arguments of the Greek skeptics by giving the stories an allegorical interpretation.[29] But this battle takes place outside the Jewish domain, and it has no influence on Judaism.

Only during the Arabic period does Greek philosophy begin to have a profound influence on Judaism. Philosophy's requirement to have a refined, enlightened faith now penetrates into the core of Judaism. It spreads first among the Jews in Arab lands starting from the time of Saadia Gaon. Saadia and the Geonim after him received and affirmed the doctrine of divine incorporeality (influenced as well by the Karaites' critique of the anthropomorphisms in the Talmud and the Midrash). But this doctrine did not yet become a part of the legacy of all of Jewry.[30] The decisive campaign begins in a rather late period, about seven centuries after the closing of the Talmud, in Maimonides's generation. This is undoubtedly a very instructive phenomenon: that the doctrine of divine incorporeality is still regarded in this period as a foreign innovation among the masses of pious believers in France and Germany, whose faith is shaped by the Talmud and Midrash. The accepted view among them was that the Torah obligates one to believe that God has a visage and that whoever denies this denies the Torah and God's existence.[31] We are familiar with Rabad's criticism of

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[29] See especially the arguments of Celsus against the biblical (and Christian) lore and the counterarguments of Origen on this matter: Origen, *Contra Celsum,* throughout. Celsus argues against the story that God "fashioned the man with His hands and breathed the breath of life into him" and that He made woman from his rib (*Contra Celsum*, 4:36ff.). He also argues against the stories that God regretted that He had made mankind (Gen. 6:5–7), that the world was created in six days, and that God "rested" afterward and "was refreshed" (*Contra Celsum*, 6:58ff., 61). It is absurd to attribute hands, mouth, and voice to God (6:61–62). He similarly argues against the story of creation in the divine image, because God is not like any form (6:63). It is also absurd to ascribe motion to Him (6:64). Origen responds to all this that one should understand these stories allegorically.

[30] See the letter of Abraham, son of Maimonides, which says of the doctrine of incorporeality: "All this is without a doubt among any of the members of the Israelite community, from the extreme East to the extreme West *in all the inhabitants of the lands of Ishmael* [i.e., Muslim countries]," and only people "across the sea, among the inhabitants of the islands from the distant ends of the earth, err in this great principle and are ensnared by the literal sense of the biblical verses and the literal sense of the midrashim and rabbinic lore."

[31] See Maimonides, *Guide*, 1:1. He writes similarly in his letter to his son concerning the people of France, "who speak blasphemously of God" "with their materializing conceptions." And in the letter on the resurrection, he mentions the corporealizers "from the inhabitants of the far-off lands" who consider the denial of corporeality to be heresy. Rab-

Maimonides's statement that whoever says that God is a body with a shape is a heretic: "Why should this one be called a heretic, when many *greater and better than he* followed this view?" According to Naḥmanides's testimony, the rabbis of France protested against Maimonides, who said that God has no visage.[32] Zealots such as Rabbi Solomon of Montpellier, who opposed the doctrine of incorporeality, spoke in the name of "the faith of the Talmud."[33] Rabbi Moses Taku went out to battle against all the adherents of purified faith, producing many evidences from all the sources of Judaism that the Creator has a visage and arguing that whoever denies this denies the Written Torah and the Oral Torah.[34] Pious and observant Jews, who studied Torah and Talmud their whole lives and derived all their education from the traditional sources, did not know that "this is all a parable."[35] We have no better proof than this: the whole problem of whether God has a visible form is outside the purview of original Judaism.

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bi Abraham the son of Maimonides says in the above-mentioned letter that the corporealizers of France inherited their "corrupt beliefs" from their forebears. See D. Kaufmann, *Geschichte der Attributenlehre* (1877), 484ff.

32 Naḥmanides Letter to the Rabbis of France, "Against the Ban on Maimonides's Books." See *Sefer Iggerot u-Teshuvot Ha-Rambam* (Lemberg, 1857).

33 See the Letter of Rabbi Abraham son of Maimonides, which says that Rabbi Solomon complained in writing to the rabbis of France "in reference to the faith of the Talmud, that there are those who deny it." In that writ, Rabbi Solomon argues that he and his colleagues never said that the Creator has a form and limbs, but Rabbi Abraham nevertheless attributes this view to them and says "that they repented of this heresy and denial." There is great significance in this detail of the debate, and from it we see how deeply rooted the basic images were. Rabbi Solomon and his colleagues argue that they do not attribute limbs to the Creator, but they believe "that the Holy God dwells in heaven, and His primary place is there, and a partition divides Him from His creatures." "Darkness and cloud surround Him." "He sits on the throne of glory, which is above the firmament that is above the heads of the *Ḥayyot*." And they similarly believe that "He descended into the cave where Moses and Elijah stood, without a cloud." We see here the same line in which Jewish religious consciousness developed previously. In ascribing limbs, the men of Montpellier feel that the divine image suffers defect and diminution, and they condemn this, but they do not feel the same way about the other images.

34 See his book *Ketav Tamim,* published in *Otzar Neḥmad* 3 (5620/1860): 58–99. He cites "the entire Torah as testimony" that the Creator has a visage, that His place is in heaven, and that He sits on His throne, etc. He brings his proof-texts from the Bible, from rabbinic lore, from the prayers, and from the words of later sages. He senses the difficulty that this raises, but he thinks that we must believe in the testimony of the Torah and that it is forbidden to inquire concerning God's being, "whether He has a body and how it all fits together" (60).

35 Even Rabbi Judah Alfakhar gives up on "the matter of God's materiality" because there are "several texts that contradict each other," because it is said that "the Torah speaks in human language," and because Onkelos translated as he did (see his answer to Rabbi David Kimḥi, "The Lord rebukes you, O Satan"). Rabbi Samuel David Luzzatto, the defender of naïve Judaism, is of the opinion that there is no harm in anthropomorphism, even though it is an incorrect view, because "theoretical truths" are inessential. See, for instance, his criticisms of Maimonides in the collection of his articles *Meḥkerei ha-Yahadut* (Warsaw, 5673–74/1913–14), 2:241. In one of his letters he says about ibn Ga-

Christianity found itself within the circle of influence of Greek thought to a much greater extent than Judaism. In its initial phase many pagans affiliated with it, including some who had a Greek education. We therefore find that the doctrine of divine incorporeality became rooted in Christianity earlier than in Judaism. Despite all the words of denigration of Greek education and of reason in general that one heard from time to time from its adherents, Christianity had to adapt to the views that were dominant in the circles of Greek intellectuals whom it wanted to influence. The anthropomorphisms of the Bible and of Christian legends were targets for the arrows of these intellectuals, and in defending them they had to explain them through allegorical interpretation. They could not award a crown of pure philosophical faith to paganism, which they detested and declared an abomination. But original Christianity, born outside the domain of Greek thought, innocently ascribed an image to God and lived in the world of images of popular Jewish lore. Only in the late Gospel of John do we find indications of philosophical influence, as it borrowed Philo's doctrine of the Logos. Not so the other Gospels, which tell their story on the level of popular folklore. According to the images dominant in the "New Testament," God dwells in heaven, sits on a throne, and is surrounded by angels (see especially Revelation beginning chap. 4, Matt. 23:22, Heb. 4:16, etc.). God descends in a cloud (Matt. 17:5, Mark 9:7, Luke 9:34–35). Jesus ascends to heaven and sits at the right hand of God (Mark 16:19, Acts 1:1ff, 7:56, Col. 3:1, Heb. 1:3, 8:1, etc.) or on God's throne (Rev. 3:21). Jesus passes through heaven (Heb. 4:14) and comes to see the face of God (Heb. 9:24). The righteous will ascend on clouds to heaven to be there with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:13–17) or the heavenly Jerusalem will come down from heaven and God will dwell in it with humanity (Rev. 21:3). Especially characteristic is the legend that Jesus ascended to heaven *after* he was resurrected. This means that he ascended to heaven *in his body* and sat to the right of God's glory. This legend is rooted in a very corporeal outlook. Close to it is the belief, which Paul enunciates, that there is no reward for the righteous without bodily resurrection. The body of the righteous will be transformed and will become like Jesus's heavenly body (1 Cor. 15, Phil. 3:21). We similarly find in the New Testament the belief that man was created in God's image literally (1 Cor. 11:7; therefore, a man does not need to cover his head). A sect existed in early Christianity that believed, based on Genesis 1:26 and similar passages, that God had a body.[36] Even though official Christianity, whose adherents knew something about Greek wisdom, rejected this view and interpreted the legends allegorically, there was always a current of anthropomorphic thought in Christianity. The more

birol, "Perhaps he attributed a kind of body to the Creator, as was the view of all the earlier thinkers" (*Otzar Neḥmad* 2 (5617/1857): 205; *Meḥkerei Ha-Yahadut*, 2:205).

[36] The sect of the Audians (Odians). See Epiphanius, *Panarion adversus haereses,* § 70.

that the naïve biblical outlook prevailed, the more the tendency to corporeality prevailed with it.

Mohammed's spirited war against idolatry, and his spirited declaration that there is only one God, did not derive at all from conceiving God as incorporeal. The absolute monotheism of the Koran is as far as can be from the doctrine of incorporeality. One reads countless times the enunciation of the idea that Allah is one, that He has no fellow gods, that He has no wife or daughters or sons.[37] Those who posit fellow divine beings to God are children of Gehenna. There is also a kind of attempt to demonstrate God's unity: if there were many gods in heaven and earth, the world would be destroyed by the war among the gods (Koran, 17:45, 21:22, and other places). But this enthusiastic demand for the unity of God does not contain any element of a doctrine of incorporeality, which was beyond the comprehension of the desert people and of the Prophet himself. The Koran faith is parallel to a later stage of the Israelite religion, that of midrashic legend. According to the Koran's conception, God does not reveal himself to humankind on earth, as the early biblical lore related. Mohammed, the "seal of the prophets," does not get an utterance directly from God but from Gabriel.[38] This is the outlook that is prevalent in the late Jewish prophetic literature: God reveals himself through an angel. There is similarly prevalent in the Koran the tendency to render God sublime and to exalt God over everything. God is the Good, the Merciful, the Forgiving; He fashioned everything himself, He rules over everything himself, He supervises everything himself. He demands faith and good deeds of human beings. God is the one who sees, hears, and knows. "There is none like Him" (Koran, 42:9, 21:4, 26:122, and other places). But God is not abstract and faceless; God dwells in heaven, "the exalted roof," "the guarded roof" (21:33, 53:5). He is "Lord of the throne" (17:44, 21:22, 23:88, and other places). He possesses the "keys" of heaven and earth (42:10). He appointed guards over the heavens; they are the angels and officers who stand before Him. They guard the heavens from the satanic spirits so that they will not hear the words of God from the heavenly angels and know what was decreed behind the curtain. If a spirit lies in wait to eavesdrop, they stone him with stars and flames (37:6ff, 72ff, etc.). In time to come, the righteous will be privileged with seeing God's face (75:23).

We therefore find that anthropomorphism holds full sway in early Islam. The dispute over corporeality began only with the onset of the Mu'tazila, which endeavored to examine the principles of the faith from philosophic assumptions. Only these sages insisted on not ascribing attributes to God

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37 Koran, 17:43, 21:26, 23:91, 37:149, 52:39, 72:3, 112:3, etc.

38 According to a late conception, Mohammed also spoke with God. But according to one tradition, Aisha would announce that whoever said that Mohammed spoke with God was a heretic. See Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorans* (1909), 22–23.

and sought to give a philosophic interpretation of the anthropomorphic expressions in the Koran. But the theological conservatives were opposed to this, and their opposition was in the name of the original tradition, which was similar to what prevailed in Judaism and in Christianity. They argued that the believer ought to believe in the words of the Prophet as they stood, without qualification, and the Prophet described God with human attributes. Among the anthropomorphizing sects there were some that even said God is "flesh and blood." Indeed, God is "incomparable" in strength, power, and majesty. But with respect to form, God is "like you and me." This controversy lasted for centuries. There is no doubt that to a certain extent the conservatives were right: the doctrine of incorporeality was an innovation that stemmed from an external source. The founders of Islam did not know this doctrine at all, nor did it occur to them.

We learn from all this that Israelite monotheism in its three original forms was not bound up with the theory of divine incorporeality.

The Inner Idea of Israelite Monotheism

The basic metaphysical idea of Israelite monotheism was born not from contemplating the hierarchy of the universe and the orders of its phenomena and connections of cause and effect but from a new primal religious intuition, which made all being contingent on a supreme, absolute *divine will.*

The Israelite idea of divine unity did not stem from inquiring into the nature of being and the divine essence. The path to the idea of unity by way of this inquiry necessarily proceeds by way of abstraction. But for the Israelites, this idea was born out of a new religious feeling, a lightning flash of faith in God, which raised the idea of a supreme, ruling divine will. The idea was voluntaristic, not ontological. It proposed no new idea concerning the divine essence but proclaimed faith in a God, the dominance of whose will has no boundary or limit. It did not approach the "dark cloud," it did not seek to gaze inside, it did not seek to raise the curtain of the divine mystery. Paganism sought all these things. But the Israelite idea announced that over all being rules a God who knows no limit to His will, to His rule, to His power. "Everything that God desires, He does." Not incorporeality but *absolute supremacy of the divine will*—this is the originating idea of the Israelite faith in divine unity.

Once this idea arose from its house of conception, it shattered into many splinters. All the history of the Israelite religion was latent in it. It was not formulated in a system of theoretical concepts but sought expression in symbols.

Supremacy and sanctity—these were the primary symbols of the new idea.

The new God was revealed to Israel *as a supreme God doing miracles.* The ancient folklore pictures Him not as a God ruling only over Israel but as a God performing wonders with the sun and moon, in heaven and earth, on the sea and dry land. Everything is subordinate to Him. Furthermore, the ancient lore knows of *no war between YHWH and other divine powers*, as we shall prove later on. "YHWH is the God"—this is the expression of the new idea. Monumental testimony to the rootedness of this idea and the profundity of its effect is the fact that *YHWH has no mythology*, as we shall see in detail later. Israelite lore does not know how to tell anything about *the life* of this God, the events He passed through, His fate. "Fate" has no power over him. This God has no "genealogy," no lust, no birth, no progeny, no growing up, no death, and so forth. He has no mythological dimension. We shall see later that the popular belief conceived of this God the same way. This means that the basic idea of Israelite religion was bound up from its inception in a radical division *between God and the world.* The world and its phenomena, the warp and woof of myth, were not perceived in this idea as a revelation of God's life, as the garment of God's being, but as the manifestation of God's *will*, the site of God's *supreme rule*. God and the world are two beings, which have no connection, whether natural, magical, or mythological. The idea of the absolute dominance of the divine will severed that connection. Where such a natural connection exists, there is also fate, suffering, enslavement* to necessity, mythology. The idea of the supremacy of the divine will uprooted the notion of God and world that is the foundation and root of paganism: the notion of the divinity as embedded in the hierarchy of the laws of the world and its material nature and subordinate to a supreme fate. The victory over paganism was implicit in severing the natural-mythological connection between God and the world, its material and causal laws. Elevating God over the world and its phenomena also elevated God over the *multiplicity* of the world. A supreme God is one.

Another primary symbol of the new idea is *sanctity.* Sanctity is not "natural" closeness to divinity or belonging to the divine in a property relation (taboo), as Robertson Smith tried to explain it, nor is it supreme power and force as Dussaud sought to explain it.[39] It is a dimension of supreme being over natural being, an exalted sphere above the spheres of reality of the visible world. Beyond the visible world there is a sphere of other life transcending the sphere of life in which humankind and other animals have their existence. The visible world draws its energy [*shefa'*] from that hidden sphere. There is a supernal, intensified sphere for good, which is *the sacred,* and corresponding to it there is an infernal, intensified sphere for

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* Translator's note: "Enslavement"—*shi'bud* (also translated "subordination").

39 See Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1907), 92ff., 140ff., 151, 395, 401, etc., and René Dussaud, *Les origines cananéennes du sacrifice israélite* (Paris: Leroux, 1921), 30ff.

evil, which is *the impure.* Whatever emanates from the higher sphere and whatever belongs to it is holy; whatever emanates from the infernal sphere and whatever belongs to it is impure. In this intensified realm of being are latent secret intensified *powers*. But the power in itself is not the essence of sanctity (or of impurity) but its *activity*. The sacred in itself is an attribute of *being*, not of activity.

The distinction between the profane [i.e., ordinary] and the sacred (and the impure) is the fundamental distinction of religion in general, and it is not, of course, an innovation of Israelite religion. But paganism imagined the sacred as implanted in the world, as having a "natural" connection with its phenomena, a kind of second, hidden side of the world's nature. Paganism sanctified many natural things; it assigned a natural sanctity to many phenomena in the world. It invested with sanctity the waters, fire, various animal species, trees, stones, fountains, rivers, mountains, and caves. It sanctified the earth, the heavens, and the stars and planets. Corresponding to this natural sanctity, it set aside a sphere of "natural" impurity. But Israelite religion desacralized all natural phenomena. It knows of no material object that is sacred in its own right. The proof is that it does not know of any category of holy objects in nature. It concentrated all sanctity in God, who rules the world, in the God who transcends the cosmos. Objects can only possess "historical" sanctity by virtue of God's will or as a result of God's deeds and commandment. We can recognize the profound effect of the new idea especially in the transformation that took place in the conception of *impurity*. Israelite religion knows of no natural sanctity, but it seems to have knowledge of natural impurity: the impurity of the human corpse, of semen, of menstruation, of leprosy, of a dead animal, and of reptiles and other impure animal species. This is a carryover from an earlier religious phase. But corresponding to this, a transformation takes place in the very concept of impurity: biblical faith has no knowledge of the pagan concept of a *dangerous* impurity emanating from a supernatural, demonic, unique root, equal in its level of being to the divine. It abolished the notion of Ahrimanic impurity, simultaneously impure and evil, as we shall see in detail later. It united good and evil in one jurisdiction. This is expressive of a profound, radical transformation. There is only one domain of supreme being, that of sanctity—of God. It is not in nature, in the visible world, nor is it connected to it by a natural connection. The sacred is in God, and its flow is contingent on God's will and commandment. Therefore, the sacred served in Israelite religion as a symbol of God's supremacy over all, a symbol of God's uniqueness. It reserved sanctity to God and to everything that flows from God's will. Only one being is holy. The sublimity of the holy expresses the sublimity of God. *Holy* is the concept in Israelite religion that stands parallel to *incorporeal* in the philosophical religion. The sublimity of the holy God expresses a kind of aspiration toward abstraction, toward incorporeality.

But Israelite religion did not attain the idea of incorporeality in its philosophical formulation on its own. This limitation followed to a certain extent from the very nature of the conditions of its being and development.

The basic idea of Israelite religion—the supremacy of the divine will, raising God over every nature and fate—left no room for the tension of divine forces fighting each other, for a divine mythological drama. Is there any place for drama, for activity, for striving for living embodiment where there is one supreme decisive will? Israelite religion transferred the divine-world drama from the domain of nature and its forces to the domain of *the human will.* The divine will rules over all. But it has one "limitation": the will of the human, to whom God has granted free choice and the power *to sin.* By human sin, the supreme divine will has become, as it were, impaired. This is the opening for evil in the world. Opposite the divine will is set the human will; in place of the mythological tension between divine forces comes the moral tension between God's will and man's will. This is the special sphere of the divine drama in Israelite religion. To the absolute will belongs an aspiration that remains to be fulfilled. God commands, and the human can either fulfill God's command or disobey Him. In place of mythological tension comes *historical* tension. This religion was interested not in the events of the god and his life, his desires, his wars, and his victories among the other gods but in the events of God's *commandment*, His teaching, His activity among human beings. Human society, human history, man's religious and ethical dedication—these were the campaigns of the "war" of the supreme God. For this reason, it is correct to say that a special connection obtains between Israelite religion, on the one hand, and history and morality, on the other. It is true that Israel's God is a historical and ethical God and that human social life takes the place of God's special activity in the Israelite religion. But those scholars were mistaken who imagined they had found the *root* of Israelite religion here. The historical and ethical character of Israelite religion was more correctly only a *result* of the way that the basic metaphysical idea became embodied. The *national* element in Israelite religion was likewise only a mode of its embodiment, a necessary framework but not its foundation and root. This will be clarified later on.

Indeed, a faith at whose center stands the activity and commandment of God within humanity could not develop on the basis of the idea of divine incorporeality.

Pagan thought arrived from the idea of divine incorporeality to the idea of divine unity and also to the idea of God's transcendence over the sensible world. On this line, the paths crossed. But pagan thought, with all its abstractions, never arrived at the root idea of Israelite religion: at the absolute dominance of the divine *will* over being, at absolute *liberation* of divinity from the chains of law, of nature, of fate. The subordination of the divinity to nature and mythic fate remains alive and standing in pagan

thought even at its most exalted peaks. For the hidden, impersonal God of pantheism, the world serves as a "natural" garb, which it cannot shed. There is a "lawful," necessary connection between the sublimely hidden one who exists in truth and his garments, the imaginary world of phenomena that emanates from him. This is an eternal game. In the system of Spinoza, one of the most striking embodiments of pagan thought, God is fettered by the iron chains of the "geometric method" and its eternal domination. This is the law of divinity; this is its fate. Aristotle's cause of causes is first in rank of being. Everything proceeds from it, and there is no cause higher than it. But its connection with the effects contingent on it is natural and necessary. It is caught up with them as a link in a chain. The connection is an eternal connection, not dependent on a divine will. This is the fate that rules the divinity.

Furthermore, in the quest of metaphysical thought for abstraction and transcendence, it elevated divinity *above all will.* Will has a human element, the desire of imperfect being for a thing of which it senses the lack. But divinity is perfection, and therefore it has no striving or will. Being at rest, serene, without change or transformation and thus without will—this is the extreme of abstraction, of incorporeality. It raised divinity up above will and also tended to raise it over personality in general and to subsume it to impersonal or supra-personal being. Nirvana—this is a "divine" state characteristic of pagan incorporeality/abstraction. Or: happiness of the self, self-satisfaction. Or: the supreme idea in an unchanging world of eternal ideas. Or: a supreme intellect that knows only itself. The will is, in Spinoza's system, a vain delusion. In true, divine reality, it has no place. Here there is only a geometric connection of things and ideas.

A fortiori, metaphysical abstraction, by aspiring to sublimity and transcendence, removed divinity from all matters of the lower worlds and in particular from the human being's concerns, aspirations, and history. The supreme intellect knows only itself and not the lower worlds. How much less does it "supervise" them or provide for their concerns. This God is too exalted and transcendent for them. Metaphysical incorporeality by its nature rejects *providence.* The world order is rooted in divinity, but this is by virtue of a natural, necessary, eternal power, not the power of a providential, constantly active will. A fortiori, this divinity does not engage in human history, perform miracles for humanity, or give Torah and commandments. Similarly, this God is exalted over human *morality.* A "moral" God—another anthropomorphism! Philosophical religion transfers the focus of activity from God to man, to human intellect. The human being must *strive toward divinity,* to ascend by degrees of being and arrive at the divine level. Man must be released from the material. He must empower the rational soul. Perfection of intellect is the way to the supreme world of ideas. At a lower level, pagan-philosophical religion also believes in the power of certain magical rites and mystical "sanctities" to raise the soul to the divine

heights. Social morality can also serve as a basis for this, a lower level in the ladder of intellectual perfection.

The idea of incorporeality, as it was formulated in all reaches of the pagan world, did not include the *liberation* of divinity from its mythological subordination and the imposition of its *will* on the world. On the other hand, the idea of incorporeality brought about a *distancing* of the divinity from the world and from humanity and the abolition of the idea of *providence.* This was a fundamental negation of the popular religion. Nowhere did abstract philosophical religion become a popular religion.

It is therefore natural that the Israelite religion, whose fundamental idea was the supreme ruling will of God, the will that commands and acts in human life, did not proceed at first along the path toward incorporeality. Its God was all will and activity; its "essence," beyond the curtain of will and activity, was unknown. He was not a restful and serene God of the heights, happy in self-satisfaction, who had nothing to do with the lower worlds and with human fate. He was a "zealous God," commanding and demanding, keeping track of sins and performing kindnesses, a redeeming God, doing good and creating evil. He was close to man's life and destiny. Moreover, He was a *self-revealing God.* The characteristic innovation of the Israelite religion was prophecy in its special Israelite version. The bearer of the new God's word was not the priest who contemplated the mysteries of being and its divine powers, nor the philosopher living in the transcendental world of ideas, but the prophet, and especially the apostolic prophet. The apostolic prophet was a unique phenomenon in the world and special to the Israelite religion in its period of origin. In it was embodied the essence of this faith: faith in the God of the will and action. It was not man who according to this idea seeks a path to God's serene heights; God is the one who comes down to man to show him the way. This faith was intrinsically connected with revelation and prophecy.

It should not therefore be surprising that Israelite faith was innocently bound up with imagining the visage of the God of prophecy and vision. The divine visage was a necessary symbol of the divine personality; of God's appearing in order to act, command, and judge; of God's closeness to the human being and to his destiny. A symbol—for one should note the limitation that Israelite religion observed from the outset in imagining a visage of God: it excluded any mythological likeness, any likeness that smacked of subordination to matter and the natural hierarchy, any likeness that suggested a biography of God. Its likenesses were not descriptions of God's fate but symbols of the revelation of God's will and activity, as we shall explain further below. God's *pamalia* [< *familia*, entourage] were not God's parents, children, wives, and servants but God's emissaries, symbols of God's rule over the world. In the absence of material connection and mythology, the likeness of God naturally became a symbol, even though God's incorporeality was not explicitly formulated as such.

Moreover, even though Israelite religion never arrived at the idea of incorporeality, it was steeped in transcendence at a level to which pagan thought with all its abstractions never arrived. Imposing the divine will on all being broke reality into two parts: the world, which was subordinated to law and hierarchy; and the God, who is outside the hierarchy and above it. The divine will draws the line between these two domains. There is no natural connection at all between the divine being and the being of the world: not the connection between the garment and its wearer, as in pantheism; not the connection between the form and the image and shadow, as in Plato's doctrine of ideas; not the connection of emanation, as in Neoplatonism; not the connection between natural cause and effect, as in Aristotelianism. The divine being, behind the curtain of the divine will, is fundamentally other than the being of the world. The world is created through the divine "utterance"—this is a major symbol.

Similarly, the Israelite religion—despite its lack of abstraction—arrived at a sublimity of its God-concept that pagan thought never attained. It arrived at this sublimity, too, from its fundamental aspiration: to make the divine will dominant over all, even evil, even matter. Out of the aspiration to exalt the divine being, pagan thought sought, following its mythology, to exclude *evil* from the divine domain. God is the good. It would be a defect to envisage God as the root of evil. Evil has its own special metaphysical root. Evil is something extra-divine that became commingled with the good. Evil is nothingness, it is the boundary edge of the good, and so forth. Israelite faith did not travel this path. It did not leave room for a reality rivaling God. Such a reality would set limits to God's will and freedom; necessity would be setting bounds to God's will. Israelite faith united evil and good under a single jurisdiction. This means that it raised divinity above good and evil. God is not light or darkness, not life or death. God *rules* over all these. All these proceed from God's will. This unification of good and evil under one jurisdiction is steeped in powerful transcendence.

All paganism envisaged the creation of the world as emergence from primal matter. Following mythological thought, pagan metaphysical thought established the preexistence of matter as a foundational principle. From God came the Logos, the world order, and creative force. But matter did not originate from the divine. The idea of the preexistence of matter stemmed on the one hand from the scientific assumption that something cannot be created from nothing. On the other hand, it satisfied the demand of the exalted principle of incorporeality that raised divinity over any contact with matter. Matter is evil, nothingness, death. Therefore, it is foreign to God. We see here that in this facet also the Israelite religion did not follow the pagan principle of incorporeality. The Bible in its naïveté does not deal with this question. We cannot determine from the creation narratives in the Bible whether the world was created from nothingness or from preexisting matter. Only one thing is clear: The Bible does not know of the

pagan necessity for preexisting matter. (On this, see my later chapter: "The Israelite Faith: Tales of God.") Moreover, at the very moment that Israelite faith felt the pressing reality of this problem in its theoretical formulation, at the moment that it encountered the metaphysical assumption concerning preexisting matter, it rejected it forcefully. Preexisting matter would pose a limitation to the divine will and the divine rule. Matter, too, was *created* by the divine will. There is no reality outside God's jurisdiction.[40] The faith that had not arrived at the metaphysical abstraction of incorporeality arrived nevertheless at an unprecedented sublimity of conception of the divine being—a sublimity that even pagan thought, with all its abstractions and refinements, would never achieve. This also partook of a powerful impulse to transcendence. This was a unique insight into divinity, conceiving the thought that the most refined paganism could not conceive, namely, that matter was created, that the world was created *ex nihilo*. This was the highest idea of the divine. It is clear that such sublimity could not have been achieved by promoting one god to rulership over the other gods, as Hume hypothesized.[41] This was a faith that was born of a unique primal intuition: from the idea of a supreme divine will.

One therefore finds that at the hour that the Israelite faith came into contact with the world of Greek thought on the question of the image or incorporeality of God, it accepted the idea of incorporeality and made it primary. It seemed to the Hellenistic Jews that this was a fundamental Israelite notion, included among the core beliefs of Israelite faith, and that the Greek sages had borrowed it from them. It appeared that way also to the later

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[40] *Ber. Rab.*, 1:12: "A philosopher asked Rabban Gamaliel: 'Your god is a great artist, but he found good materials that aided him: *tohu, bohu,* darkness, air, water, and the depths.' Rabban Gamaliel responded: 'God blast his spirit! According to the Torah, every one of them was created.'" See the saying of Rab, *b. Ḥag.*, 12a: "Ten things were created on the first day: [heaven and earth, *tohu*, *bohu,* light and darkness, wind and water, the measure of day and the measure of night]." This is perhaps also the intent of Ben Zoma, who "astounded the world" concerning the verse "And God made the firmament": "'And he *made?*'—this is strange. Weren't they created by [the divine] utterance?" (*Ber. Rab.*, 4:6). Nevertheless, we find that rabbinic lore tells naïvely, following the biblical narrative, also of creation from preexisting material. Thus they said that the world was established on the Foundation Stone (*b. Yoma*, 54b). We have also learned in a Baraita: "Rabbi Eliezer said: The world was built out from the middle" (that is to say, the solid land in the middle of the world came first, and from there all was created), "Rabbi Joshua said: The world was created from the sides" (that is to say, the waters around the land came first, and from there all was created; ibid.). On the creation of the lights, the aggadic masters said: "The Holy and Blessed One wrapped himself in it as a cloak and the light of His radiance shone from one end of the world to the other" (*Ber. Rab.*, 3:4). We find in a later midrash that the waters were created from the light of God's garment and the earth from the snow under the throne of God's glory (*Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, § 3). Overall, the rabbinic lore is oblivious to the problem. But once it encounters the view that the matter was there of necessity and that without prior materials God would not have been able to create the world, it rejects this view forcefully.

[41] See above, n. 2.

Geonim. Also Naḥmanides, who was wholehearted in his faith and had no tendency to philosophy, wrote that the principle that there is no supernal form or divine visage "is written in the Torah, repeated in the prophetic writings, and enunciated a third time in the Hagiographa."[42] This idea was later incorporated into the enumerated articles of faith and was given a place in the liturgy. Indeed, Judaism accepted this idea from Greek thought, but it assimilated it, taking it out of its pagan context and appropriating it with a change of essence. It found in it a complement to its own nature, incorporating it into a system of ideas very different from the one in which it had originated. In paganism the doctrine of incorporeality served as a factor for exalting divinity over the element of personality and will, for subsuming divinity into an eternal empyrean realm of being, into an idea exalted over all will and activity. It served as a factor for distancing divinity above mankind, his life and moral struggle. Even so, it never arrived at the idea of divine freedom, of liberating the divinity from the law of the cosmos. Not so in Judaism. Judaism sensed that the idea of incorporeality was complementary to its own basic idea: the absolute supremacy and dominion of God over all, liberation of God from all subordination to nature, law, cosmic hierarchy, fate. It did not originally sense the problem latent in the imagistic depiction of God. In all naïveté it envisaged a visage of God, without sensing that this might impugn the supremacy of His will or the absolute freedom of His divine rule. It did not feel that the divine visage was tainted with subordination to the laws of space. But once it sensed this, owing to the influence of Greek thought, it accepted divine incorporeality as a necessary complement to the idea of the supreme, free God. This liberated God from a connection to space. The idea that in paganism had served as a basis for the concept of a distant, exalted God, beyond personality, beyond will, subordinated eternally to the law of being, served the Israelite faith as a final complement to the concept of a free God, supreme over all, personal, acting, and commanding. Judaism absorbed the idea while radically changing its pagan essence. It was subsumed under its concept of holiness. It was a new formation, and in a certain respect it drew substance from the inner substance of Judaism, resulting in an original intrinsic creation.

Nevertheless, Judaism hesitated and took its bearings before absorbing the idea of incorporeality. The pangs of absorption lasted for a millennium. This was a "lily among thorns." Incorporeality disposed of the final limitation and subordination [of the original Israelite God-concept] and complemented the idea of divine supremacy. But there was opposition and tension between the element of incorporeality and the element of will and activity. The envisaged God of prophecy and rabbinic lore was more appropriate to Judaism's practical striving. Incorporeality provided theoretical satisfac-

[42] See his letter to the rabbis of France, cited earlier.

tion, but it was steeped in a kind of practical limitation. At any rate, the idea of incorporeality made its appearance to Jewish eyes embedded in a systematic framework of pagan metaphysical ideas. The idea of incorporeality was bound up with raising God beyond the elements of personality, beyond will, beyond providence, beyond the ability to impart commandment and ethics. To the Jewish sensibility, the whole system smacked of subordinating God, not liberating Him. Accepting the idea of incorporeality was liable to set Judaism before a new problematic of incomparable difficulty and complexity. In what respect could it prove advantageous and complementary to Jewish faith, and in what respect could it be a source of heresy and apostasy? Faced with enlightened pagan thought, wholehearted Jewish faith sensed first and foremost its heretical danger. It therefore rejected and abominated it no less than it rejected popular paganism. It preferred its liberating irrationality over the subordinating rationality of pagan metaphysics.

This will help explain one of the most instructive phenomena of intellectual history. Priestly and philosophical paganism surpassed Israelite faith in its metaphysical speculations and arrived at the conception of an incorporeal divinity, whether pantheistic, idealistic, or causal. Metaphysically this conception seems to surpass the Israelite personal, envisaged conception of God. Eventually Israelite religion accepted the idea of God's incorporeality from pagan thought. Nevertheless, Judaism abominated and stigmatized all paganism in the name of its own conception of God's exaltation and sublimity. The explanation of this phenomenon lies in the basic idea of Israelite religion—the supremacy of the divine will. From it, Israelite faith was able to overcome myth and eliminate any mythological subordination of God to nature. From it, it arrived at exalting God over all being, and depicting God as acting, commanding, and ethically concerned. The pagan incorporeal God-concept did not include the idea of God's supreme freedom and supreme rule. In this respect it retained the yeast of mythology. Judaism accepted the idea of God's incorporeality only by revising it substantially to conform to its own spirit. But Judaism was suspicious of abstract pagan thought, despite its advanced metaphysics, because at bottom it still represented *paganism*, with its limitation and subordination of the divine. Therefore, it fought against it as well.

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Israelite faith thus originated not from one or another historical event, not from sealing a national covenant, not from political prosperity, not from the trauma of destruction, and so forth, but from the revelation of *a new religious-metaphysical idea.* In the course of the generations this idea would

generate an entire worldview and life regimen, even though at the time it came into the world enveloped in a national garb and intertwined with the events of the day. It was steeped in transcendence unequalled since in the world. But it could be grasped in vision and likeness. It was born through visionary intuition and could be grasped through symbols. Therefore, it could be made into a *popular faith*. A God whose rule knew no bounds, who was all-capable, from whom everything originated, who was holy, sublime, zealous, ruling over good and evil, sending the word of His rule by way of prophets, one with no equal—all these could be grasped by popular religious feeling. This idea could be born among the people of the desert and could arouse passion among the people of the desert. A similar idea aroused passion at a later time among the Arab tribes at the time of Mohammed. It was not born from the speculations of Babylonian or Egyptian priests—from their aspiration to the idea of divine unity on the basis of abstract scientific knowledge. From the outset, it was foreign to these speculations. It declared war on all paganism, and it accepted the idea of divine incorporeality from paganism only after many generations and out of considerable struggle. It was born of the flame of religious feeling, and it was infused throughout with sublimity and adoration of the supreme, the One, whose will rules over all. This idea of the divine unity stipulated the imposition of a single free divine will over all being. Therefore, it was radically opposed to all paganism: popular or priestly-philosophical. It did not come about through abstraction and was not dependent on it. It was expressed in symbols, not abstract concepts. The new idea was popular, and its original activity was popular: a profound struggle against mythology, banishing mythology from Israel, creating a full world of non-mythological religious symbols. These were symbols of God's freedom and supremacy. The idea stamped all ancient Israelite culture with its imprint.

We will devote the following chapters to a clarification of this phenomenon.

Freud's Book on Moses and the Monotheistic Faith

Introductory Note by Lawrence Kaplan

Yehezkel Kaufmann's review essay of Sigmund Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* (*Der Mann Moses und die monotheistische Religion*) was first published in the Israeli journal *Moznaim* 10 (1940): 199–211; and reprinted in Kaufmann's collection of essays *Mi-kivshonah shel ha-yetzirah ha-mikra'it* (Tel-Aviv: Dvir, 1966), 240–55. Despite the essay's evident importance both as a penetrating and fundamental critique of Freud's controversial theses and as a major source for Kaufmann's own views on the origins of religion, the fact that the essay appeared in Hebrew, and, until now, was not translated into any modern European language has severely limited its readership. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, in his very well-known and highly influential book *Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991), 135, note 7, cites and, indeed, highlights the significance of Kaufmann's essay, but even the fame of Yerushalmi's book could not enable the essay to overcome the formidable language barrier. I hope that with this translation Kaufmann's essay will finally achieve the readership it deserves, both among Kaufmann scholars and also—and perhaps primarily—among Freud scholars, most of whom, alas, like the master himself, are "ignorant of the language of Holy Writ."

A draft of this translation was prepared, under my supervision, by my student Briah Cahana, and was revised by me. I thank Ms. Cahana for her excellent work, it being understood, of course, that I bear sole responsibility for any errors and imprecisions. The page references in the original Hebrew essay are to *Der Mann Moses und die monotheistische Religion*, Amsterdam, 1939; the page references in this translation are to the Vintage edition (New York, 1939) of *Moses and Monotheism* in Katherine Jones' felicitous and fluent translation. All the numbered footnotes in the essay, with the exception of the first, are by the translators.

Freud's Book on Moses and the Monotheistic Faith

Yehezkel KAUFMANN*

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The book about Moses and the origins of the monotheistic faith by the founder of psychoanalysis[1] made a great impression on wide circles of Jewish intellectuals—even those who are generally unacquainted with critical biblical scholarship. Before the particulars of the book's contents were widely publicized, Freud's enthusiastic acolytes were unable to refrain from weeping tears of joy upon hearing the good news that Freud, in his old age, remembered the rock whence he was hewn and wrote a book on the Jewish faith. However, when a few details of his research became known, people were stunned. It became known that Freud sought to prove that Moses was an Egyptian, a member of the faithful entourage of the Pharaoh Ikhnaton, the founder of the belief in the unique divinity of his sun god. Apart from this, it became known that, according to Freud, Moses was killed by "the Jewish People." These claims aroused bewilderment and outrage. Many viewed this book as even constituting an attack on Judaism, and in any case, it seemed to them that the book degraded the honor of the Jewish people. The view that Moses was murdered by the "Jewish People" was likely to arouse unpleasant memories. The murder of the exalted lawmaker calls to mind the memory of another murder: the murder of "the son of man" (Freud, indeed, views these two murders as constituting one continuum; see pp. 108, 111, 129ff.). Apart from this, he stripped from the people of Israel the honor of being the originators of monotheism and he deprived them of their most chosen son. Freud himself states in his introductory remarks that it is not an easy and pleasant task to deprive a people of its greatest son, and he excuses himself in the name of the obligation to tell the truth. However, he decided to suppress that very truth on account of his fear of the Catholic Church, and he finally released it to the public only after he was exiled from under the protection of her wings (pp. 69ff.).

However, it must be stressed that the matter concerning Moses' murder and all the more so, the matter concerning the Egyptian origin of monotheism, are not Freud's own innovations. Rather, they were already known conjectures in biblical criticism, and Freud did not discover any new supporting evidence. Apart from this, be the sentiments of contemporary Jew-

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* *Sifro shel froid 'al moshe ve-'al emunat-ha-yiḥud* (ספרו של פרויד על משה ועל אמונת-היחוד). Translated from *Mi-kivshonah shel ha-yetzirah ha-mikra'it* by Brian Cahana and Lawrence Kaplan.

1 Sigmund Freud, *Der Mann Moses und die monotheistische Religion*, Amsterdam, 1939.

ish intellectuals as they may—the image of historical Judaism is not damaged by these conjectures (even if we suppose that they are true). The murder of prophets is one sin in the long litany of sins which both Scripture and later Judaism ascribe to the people of Israel. Moreover, one might view the murder of the prophets as even stemming naturally from the essence and role of prophecy, from the great tension prophecy's harsh rebuke produces in the nation's soul. The clash between the nation and the prophet is formidable, and it agitates the very depths. One could say that prophecy would not have been prophecy had it not possessed the power and had it not been part of its very nature to enrage the people, arouse its wrath, and bring it to hostile acts against the prophets, even to the extent of spilling their blood. "Your sword has devoured your prophets, like a destroying lion" declares Jeremiah (Jer 2:30). Jeremiah, himself, they sought to kill, and just a hairsbreadth separated him from death. They killed Zechariah in the courtyard of the Temple (2 Chr 24:21–22), and, according to a later legend, his blood remained bubbling until Nebuzaradan came and caused it to stop by [killing the finest of the Jerusalemites, thus avenging it by] the flowing streams of [their innocent] blood (*Lamentations Rabbah*, *Petihta* [23; cf. *Gittin* 57b; *Sanhedrin* 96b]). Despite this, Israel is still the nation of prophecy, since only that people was addressed by the prophets over the course of many generations and only on its head did the harsh chastisements of the prophets fall, "as a heavy axe." But in the end, the people sanctified the prophets' words as the word of God, and they dedicated themselves to them.

Similarly, the image of Judaism is not diminished in any way by the conjecture that Moses was an Egyptian. The Israelite faith is, to be sure, national in its form and its formative history. Nevertheless, it is not a "racial" faith. At its core, this faith is humanistic-universal. A characteristic expression of this presents itself in the attempt, which we find in the Torah, to view the belief in one God as the original belief of all humankind that existed the world over, well before the birth of the Israelite nation. Adam, Enoch, Noah, Shem, Ever, and others all believe in one God. Even in the days of Abraham, there is "a priest of God Most High" in the land of Canaan, namely, Melchizedek, to whom Abraham gives a tithe (Gen 14:18–20). God rested his divine presence also upon non-Israelite prophets. Despite this, Israel was the only nation in an idolatrous world in whose life the monotheistic faith took root and whose culture was a symbol and an expression of it. That constitutes its "chosenness." And it makes no difference who Moses was—his words took root only in Israel, and on account of this he was an Israelite and only an Israelite. There is no Moses without Israel.

And precisely the above demonstrates that these conjectures, which Freud accepted, lack all substance. Had Moses actually been murdered, that crime would have been included in the lengthy catalogue of Israel's crimes right alongside the sin of the Golden Calf, and it would not have been bur-

ied in enigmatic allusions, which only overly ingenious interpreters would be able to decipher. And had Moses received the Torah from Ikhnaton, this matter, too, could not have been completely forgotten. No one would have sensed anything problematic about a legend concerning a prophet or a king, "Priest of God Most High," who built an altar to God in the land of Egypt. Must we not assume that Moses would have brought with him the memory of his teacher to Israel? And if Moses, the Egyptian, triumphed and was sanctified by the people of Israel—how did it happen that his teacher was so completely forgotten? It can only be that these conjectures do not possess even a kernel of historical truth (we will return to this later).

2

Freud's innovation is not in these conjectures in and of themselves, but rather, in his attempt to use them to explain the origins of monotheism as well as the fate of the people of Israel on the basis of his general doctrine—that is, on the basis of his psychoanalytic doctrine. His attempt here in *Moses and Monotheism* is a continuation of his attempt in his book *Totem and Taboo* (published in 1912) to explain the origin of religion in general using the psychoanalytic method. In his book on Moses he completes that study by clarifying the origins of Judaism, Christianity (pp. 108ff.), and partially also Islam (p. 118). He gleaned his knowledge of the history of the religion of Israel from the works of various authors, and he combined them in a manner that in his view would suit his purpose. He arranged the events in an artificial manner, so that they would require his explanation and that they would be able to be explained only according to the "analogy" of neurotic illness.

Freud seeks to understand religion as a product of a psychological illness, as a product of the "neurosis of humanity," and he attempts to explain its powerful influence as one of the forms of "neurotic compulsion" acting on someone who is psychologically ill (pp. 68, 71, 130). And just like Freud's method searches for the source of psychological illnesses in the hidden depths of the individual's sexual and family life, and particularly in the impact of the father figure on the son, so here as well, his method searches for the source of the psychic illness that formed religion, within the depths of the sexual life and the family of human society, and especially—in the influence of the "primordial father" on the "sons." Religious phenomena are to be grasped according to the pattern of the individual's "neurotic symptoms," and are to be viewed as a new flashing forth of forgotten memories from the primordial era of the human family.

These neurotic phenomena in the life of an individual are rooted, according to Freud, in the sexual experiences of a very young child, approximately until the age of five. At this tender age, the desire to commit the sin

of Oedipus awakens within him: the desire to expel the father from the world, to inherit his place and fulfill his roles. The threat or punishment for the expression of this desire fills him with terror and incises a deep wound upon his soul. Feelings of fear and hatred towards the father are aroused within him. The "I" of the child protects itself and struggles to extricate itself from the fear of these experiences, to suppress and repress their memory. With the passing of this stage of life, the experiences are forgotten. They are thrust into the depths of the soul, and there they exist in submerged form. The period of latency begins and extends until the age of puberty. This is the period of the incubation of the neurotic illness. With the age of puberty, the illness reveals itself and shows its symptoms. The forgotten experiences begin to break out from their hiddenness and influence the physical and psychical life of the youth and the adult. The clearest evidence of this activity is the strength and might it possesses, its power of compulsion. This outbreak is independent of and not in harmony with the rest of the foundations of the "I." It gives rise to a strong hatred towards the father and the aspiration to rebel against him. Despite this, the relationship towards the father is not uniform, but, rather, is divided, in accordance with the divided intentions of the original oedipal desire. This desire includes not only the aspiration to expel the father but also the desire to inherit his place, to be just like him. Therefore, the after-growth of the reverberations of this outbreak in later stages of life is also divided. Hatred and fear accompany respect and aspiration for identification. The neurotic individual hates his father, but also venerates him and aspires to resemble him. This, then, is the schema of development: the original psychic wound—self-protection—a period of latency—the manifestation of the illness—and the partial emergence of the experiences that have been hidden in the depths of the psyche.

It is in accordance with the model of this phenomenon that Freud seeks to understand the source and development of the neurotic illness that serves as the source of religious belief.

This neurosis is not individual but, rather, collective, and its roots are sunk deep in the life of the human species (pp. 101ff.). It is also firmly rooted in the oedipal desire, and it is also connected with the symbol of the "father" figure. However, this is not a symbol of the image of one's personal father, but is rather a reflection of the patriarchal rule of the primeval father in the human society of this ancient and forgotten period. Freud posits, in the footsteps of Darwin and Atkinson (pp. 102ff., 167ff.), that primitive man lived in small hordes, and at the head of every family horde was a powerful male, the father, to whom all the females of his family horde, mothers and daughters alike, belonged, and he guarded them jealously from the young males—the sons. The fate of the sons was cruel. Any son who aroused the father's jealousy was killed, castrated, or expelled from the horde. These young males who were expelled were forced to live in distinct

hordes and to provide themselves with wives by snatching them from other family hordes. And the strongest one amongst them also struggled to attain the status of the sole father-tyrant in his own family horde. That was the period of the rule of the primordial father. But with the passing of time, a revolution took place—"one day" the sons gathered together against the father, overcame him, killed him, and ate his flesh, in order to ingest his power and to become like him. It is reasonable to surmise that at this time as well a war erupted among the sons. But "in the end" they understood that nothing was to be gained from this war. So they established among themselves "a brother's covenant," and a sort of "social contract" was born by renouncing instinctual gratifications and establishing obligations and holy ordinances. The sons renounced the privileges of the father, and they renounced the right of possessing the mothers and sisters. With this, the incest taboo and the obligation of exogamy came into being. However, the memory of the father lived in the heart of the sons' covenant. Remorse about the murder began to work its effect in them. It demanded that the memory of the crime be concealed and suppressed. The image of the father became exalted. Thus, there emerged a feeling of divided sentiment towards the father. Then, there emerged in the midst of humanity the deification of animals, which is the totemistic faith. The totem-animal was made into the symbol of the primordial father, and it was considered to be the father of the tribe, and through it the father was to be worshipped and venerated. This is the beginning of religion, for totemism is the first form of religion. We also find a divided relationship towards the totem: it is worshipped and admired, but from time to time the tribe sacrifices it and eats its flesh in a sacred feast—recalling the murder of the father and the eating of his flesh. Over the course of time, gods in the image of man came to replace the animals. And the belief in the gods also reveals the tendency to set up a father-god at the head of the pantheon. The end result of this development is—the exaltation of one god-father figure, one ruler, modeled after the primordial father. The murder of "the primordial father"—this is "the historical truth" concealed in religion.

3

Following these reflections of his, Freud seeks to demonstrate that faith in one god is also created as a result of a wound to the collective soul: as a result of a new patricide—the murder of Moses ("The exalted father figure" pp. 113, 140–41), and of the feeling of remorse that the murder aroused in the heart of "the sons," which thereby intensified the remorse over the primal murder. Sellin's conjecture that Moses was murdered at the hands of

the Israelites,[2] served Freud as a necessary premise in accordance with the principles of his system (p. 114). Were it not for Sellin, Freud would have had to invent it himself.

The monotheistic idea was born in the Egyptian Empire, which raised itself above the realms of other nations and lands (pp. 22ff., 80, 108). The originator of this idea was Pharaoh Ikhnaton, who ascended the royal throne approximately in the year 1375 B.C.E. Ikhnaton negated the Egyptian faith in many gods and in demons and spirits, as well as the belief in myths and magic. He proclaimed the belief in a unique god—in the sun god, whose name was Atan (or Aton). Aton was not a national god but rather a universal one, who sustains all creation. Pharaoh built a city for this god, and its name was Akhetaton (which is now the ruins of Tel-Ammon [Tell el-Amarna]), and in it he established temples for his god. He persecuted the priests of the [other] gods, especially the priests of Amon, who were his fanatical opponents. He eradicated the cult of the [other] gods in the land. He opposed the traditional cult of the dead. He stressed the requirement to live according to "Maat"—truth and justice. Therefore, his religion was universal and ethical. But a counter-reaction arose after his death. In the year 1350 BCE, Haremhab, the founder the 19th dynasty, ascended the royal throne, and he put an end to Ikhnaton's projects. Akhetaton, the city, was destroyed, the old cult returned to its former state, and the very name of Ikhnaton was scorned and cursed (pp. 25ff., 73ff.). This was the end of the Egyptian monotheism. Until this point, Freud is basically following in the footsteps of Breasted[3] and others.

From that point on, Freud speculates that Moses was a member of Ikhnaton's entourage, from the nobility of Egypt, and perhaps even of royal descent (pp. 31 and more). Freud tries to demonstrate that Moses was an Egyptian on the basis of an analysis of the legend about his birth and his upbringing in Pharaoh's house. Also testifying to this, according to Freud, is his Egyptian name, Moses (Mose), which appears as part of several Egyptian names [Amen-mose, Ptah-mose, etc]. Even after the extinction of Ikhnaton's religion, Moses remained faithful to his king's teachings and he did not wish to make his peace with the old religion. He was strong-spirited and resolute in his belief. Desolate and disconsolate, he turned his back on his people and decided to raise up for himself a new nation. He appeared amongst certain Hebrew tribes who lived in Goshen and were subjugated to Egypt. He brought his new religion to them. He taught them belief in the one god, Aton, who is Lord of the Heavens, the Adonai of the Jews. Perhaps Moses went even further and rejected the link with the Egyptian cult of the sun (pp. 28, 57, 74). He imposed on the Hebrew tribes a belief in a

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2 Translator's Note: Ernst Sellin, *Mose und seine Bedeutung für die israelitisch-jüdische Religionsgeschichte* (Leipzig: A. Deichert 1922).

3 Translator's Note: James Henry Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (New York: Scribner 1912).

universal, moral God, forbade magic and witchcraft, supressed all cultic rituals, and demanded a life of truth and justice (see pp. 41, 62, 63, 80, 82, 84, 109, 144). As a sign of the covenant, he imposed upon them the practice of circumcision, which is an Egyptian practice, and this, too, is a sign of the Egyptian origins of this religion (pp. 33ff., 46, 53, 74). Accompanying Moses was his faithful entourage, namely the Levites. The Levites, too, were Egyptian. Testifying to this are the Egyptian names that are found among them (Pinhas, Hofni, etc). Also testifying to this is their standing among the Israelite tribes: they were "strangers," who did not inherit a portion of land with the other tribes (pp. 45ff.). The appearance of a high ranking Egyptian official amongst the oppressed tribes made a great impression upon them. Moses organized the tribes and promised to bring them to the land of Canaan. During this period of anarchy, following the death of Ikhnaton and preceding the anointment of Haremhab, the exodus of the tribes from Egypt led by Moses occurred, that is: between 1358 and 1350 BCE (pp. 32, 74).

Freud describes what happens next in accordance with Sellin's conjecture, which provided him with "an unexpected way out of the difficulty" that he first encountered (pp. 42ff.). The Israelite tribes were unable to accept such a lofty a religion as that of Moses. They revolted against the powerful man, who so autocratically ruled over them. Moses' fate was similar to Ikhnaton's. The wild primitive Semites rebelled against their prophet and murdered him, casting off the yoke of his religion (pp. 57ff., 63, 64, 71, 74–75, 86, 114, 119ff.). This was a new murder of the father. This was a terrifying event that imprinted a wound in the people's soul. And this was the beginning of the development of monotheism (pp. 84, 113ff.).

The "analogy" of the development of the neurosis requires that after the wound in the soul there should be a period of latency, with the repression of the traumatic event in the hidden-depths of the soul. Freud stresses that it is possible to discern such a latency-period in the history of Israelite monotheism: it is the period between Moses and the triumph of monotheism at the beginning of the Second Temple. This is the period of the "incubation" of the neurosis, which was responsible for bringing about the triumph of Moses and his Torah. This is the "central fact" in the history of the religion of Israel (pp. 78, 87ff.). In the wake of Eduard Meyer[4] and others, Freud relates the events that occurred after the death of Moses. The tribes that left Egypt, among them the Levites, encountered other Hebrew tribes (between 1350 and 1215 BCE) in Kadesh (pp. 60 and more). They sought to forget and to repress the murder of Moses, therefore they recounted that Moses himself was in Kadesh (p. 58). It was here that the tribes established a religious covenant. The covenant, in truth, was a compromise between two

[4] Translator's Note: Eduard Meyer, *Die Israeliten und ihre Nachbarstämme. Mit Beiträgen von Bernhard Luther* (Halle a. S.: Niemeyer 1906).

religions. Here the tribes accepted the religion of YHVH, who was the local god—the god of Mount Sinai. This religion was different than the religion of Moses. It was national and connected with cultic-rites. Its god, it would appear, was not unique, but only one of the gods. They attributed their redemption from Egypt to this god. However, the Levites were the keepers of Moses' tradition, and they attempted to incorporate as much of the Mosaic tradition in the new religion as was possible. As a result of their influence the new religion was linked with the name of Moses. They forcibly imposed upon the nation the sign of the covenant of Moses' religion—the practice of circumcision. But essentially it appears that both Moses' frightful fate and his true teaching were forgotten. However, they continued to exist secretly, in latent fashion, perhaps among the Levitical priests. There was no place for them in the actual written text. The truth about them was not written down, and what was written about them was distorted and obscured. But they existed in the [oral] tradition. Freud stresses this notion of an unwritten "[oral] tradition," and this "tradition" serves him as a type of realm of latency and hidden repression that parallels the realm of the unconscious in the soul of the individual. Moses' religion was destined to triumph over the course of time, because it was "tradition" (pp. 85–86, 89, 164, 166 and more). For generations, the nation was idolatrous. But from time to time, prophets arose who renewed Moses' religion and denounced all cultic rites and established the faith upon truth and justice. Among them "the tradition" of the murder of Moses worked its effect. Finally, after many generations, the forgotten shadow of Moses' God triumphed—precisely because it was a shadow, precisely because it wrought its effect out of the hidden-depths of this "tradition" (pp. 60ff., 75, 85ff., 159ff.).

Why then did the monotheistic idea triumph precisely among the people of Israel? Because fate strengthened in the very midst of the people the impact of "the primordial sin"—the latent memory of the murder of the father at the beginning of history of man—by virtue of the fact that fate brought about a new "murder of the father," the murder of Moses. The hidden feeling of remorse for this sin strengthened the people's yearning for the venerated father-figure, for the image of the one, singular God, which is a symbol of the singular, uncontested rule of the "primordial father" (pp. 113ff., cf. pp. 171–72).

4

That this entire construction is just an ill-fitting patchwork of words and ideas artificially stitched together becomes clear to us first and foremost from an examination of its foundational premise: the premise that the "murder of the father," the primordial collective sin of all humanity, is

submerged as a traumatic-memory in the hidden depths of the individual and frightens him from then until today.

We would be allowed to posit a collective "murder of the fathers" in the days of the primordial man only if it became clear to us that the family structure in those days did not allow any room for the young males to satisfy their desire for sex and for establishing families except by murdering their fathers: in which case, the murder of the fathers would have been the most natural solution for them. However, even if we were to accept Darwin's and Atkinson's hypotheses about the origins of the primordial family, we are unable to arrive in any respect at this conclusion. For was it not also possible in the period of the primordial ruling-father for the sons to do what they did in a subsequent period: namely to seize women for themselves when they matured and became strong? And therefore they would have been able to attack an unrelated horde-family and kill its father with the young sons and abduct the women. And one may conjecture that the fear of their father would actually motivate them to attack precisely another family. This also would be a way of establishing a family by murdering "fathers," but—by murdering unrelated "fathers," which is an ordinary murder and not an oedipal murder. It goes without saying that the youngest sons, who stayed in the horde under the mothers' shelter until their father's death, achieved a family life without murdering their father. Perhaps a murderous war would break out among them. But this would be a fratricidal and not a patricidal war, the sin of Cain and not the sin of Oedipus. Certainly, instances of patricide did occur in that period. But these were only instances, even if there were perhaps many such instances. But patricide was not a general precondition for establishing new families.

Indeed, it seems as if Freud also posits this idea, inasmuch as he maintains that the patricide occurred in the beginning of a particular period, which came after the period of the rule of the father. But in no way is it understandable what was the real goal and practical purpose of the murder of the father in the beginning of the emergence of "the covenant of the sons." His description of the murder and its results is perplexing and quite irrational. The exiled brothers rebel, kill the father, and eat his flesh. And after the feast, the experience teaches them that it is better for them to forego becoming a ruling-father, and they then relinquish the women in their father's family and establish the obligation of exogamy. Hence, they relinquish the women on whose account they murdered the father. And it is only now that they suddenly decide to take other women, when they really could have taken them before the murder of their father! And if experience "finally" made them wise, then why does this experience occur only after the murder and the feast? After all, wouldn't the fear of the cruel father also lead these brothers to relinquish the mothers and sisters and to establish exogamy, and, in this way, the rule of the father would have been negated. And also the youngest brothers, who would inherit the horde after their

father's death, were likely, as a result of their experience of war, to recognize that it is better to establish "a social contract" (and perhaps together with the exiled brothers), in which case they would have also been able to negate the rule of the father without murder and without a feast. And in general: The decisive undertaking that abolished the rule of the father and formed the first human society was, even from Freud's premises, not the murder of the father and also not the taboo regarding the mothers and the sisters. This is because the murderous war, which arose from the aspiration to acquire the father's exclusive rule, could also have broken out with respect to exogamous women. "The decisive step," therefore, was "the covenant" establishing that the right to possess the women of the society is not the right of just one man; that is to say, "a covenant" regarding the parceling out of women. And because of this, it must be emphasized that the prohibition of incest did not flow from the "first covenant" as Freud describes it: The war of the brothers could also have ended in the allocation of the mothers and the sisters. And the essential point is that precisely "this covenant" of sexual tolerance among the males, which made possible the very foundation of this new society, is not dependent in any respect upon patricide. Freud inserted here the murder of the father in an artificial way. Therefore, there is absolutely no basis for the assumption that "the decisive step" in abolishing the rule of the father and in founding human society was the murder of the father (p. 103). And it follows, then, that there are no grounds for the assumption that weighing down on the soul of all humanity is the "original sin" of murdering the father.

Equally baseless is the idea that totemism is connected to the murder of the primordial fathers. Freud stresses that the totem comes to replace the primordial father, since the totem is also thought of as the father of the tribe, that is: the begetter of the tribe (pp. 104–105; he especially stresses this point in his book *Totem and Taboo*). To the contrary, it is clear that the primordial "father" is not at all viewed as the one who engenders the family. In his book *Totem and Taboo*, Freud dismisses this matter with a flimsy remark. But in truth, there is a decisive argument, here, which completely destroys his viewpoint. There is no doubt that primitive man did not know the role of the male in procreation. Early man could see the connection between the child and the mother, but the connection between the newborn and the father escaped him. This clearly emerges from the views of several primitive peoples regarding the family. This is derived from the fact that the rights of the mother preceded the rights of the father. This is also reflected in the myth about the primeval mother-goddess from whom the cosmos was engendered.[5] And since the primordial "father" is thought of

[5] Translator's Note: Kaufmann would appear to be referring here to the Sumerian cosmogonic myth about the primeval sea, Nammu, "the mother who gave birth to all the gods." Note that Kaufmann does not refer to this myth in his extended survey of pagan creation myths in Vol. 1 of *Toledot ha-emunah ha-yisre'elit* (Tel Aviv: Bialik Institute/

only as a husband and not as a father, the totem consequently could not have been considered as symbolizing him. On the contrary, the totem is thought of as the true father, the divine source of the fecundity of the tribe, since to begin with they did not recognize its human source. This clearly shows that primordial man's apprehension of divinity originated without any connection to the primordial "father," and all the more so without any connection to the memory of some supposed patricide.

The absence of any connection between the idea of the totem and the idea of the primordial father may also be proven from the fact that the scope of the idea of the totem is much wider even than the scope of a father who is an engenderer. Because, first of all, not only an animal might be viewed as a totem, but also a plant and even a purely physical object. Apart from this, we find amongst the primitives not only a belief in an engendering totem, but also in a totem from animals or from plants that serves as a source of nourishment for man. Apart from this, the totem also serves as a receptacle for the "external soul" of a person: The life of every member of the tribe is bound up in a mysterious fashion with one of the animals that are viewed as the totem of the tribe. These animals are not viewed as engenderers, but rather as brothers and sisters. The backdrop of this faith, then, is the image of fraternity and not that of paternity. Neither the nourishing-totem nor the fraternal-totem can be derived from the deification of the primordial father-husband.

And in general, the scope of the image of the god is so much wider than the image of the primordial "father" that there is no true possibility to derive the image of the god from the image of the "father." The gods are creators, the providers of rain and food, the creators of thunder and lightning, the ministers of light and darkness, life and death and sickness, the ministers of wisdom and magic; they are inventors, leaders, judges, and the like. These gods are the sun and the moon, the heavens and the earth, the wind and the waters and fire, and the like. How can all this be derived, even via a thousand permutations, from the veneration of the primordial father-husband who jealously guards the women? Even the original worship of the fathers cannot be explained as deriving from this veneration, because included in the worship of the fathers is the veneration of the superior man: the leader, the king, the creator, the inventor, the legislator, the magician.

Dvir, 1937), pp. 302–24, but Moshe Greenberg in his abridged translation (prepared in consultation with Kaufmann), *The History of the Religion of Israel* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), 24–25, does include in brackets a very brief summary of this myth. This myth was first published in Henri de Genouillac, *Textes religieux sumériens du Louvre*, Tomes I-II (Paris: Musée du Louvre, 1930), 71:6; and Edward Chiera, *Sumerian Myths and Epics* (Oriental Institute Publications XV; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1934), 116:16. Evidently it came to Kaufmann's notice sometime after 1937, the year he published the first volume of *Toledot*, but before 1940, the year he published his review of *Moses and Monotheism*.

This is the deification of heroes, as Carlyle understood it, and not the deification of the father-husband.

The question of religion as Freud formulates it is: is religion "material truth" or is it only "historical truth"? That is to say: is religion true according to its *content* or is it just a shadow projected by some *historical* event? And Freud's answer is: it is not true according to its content, but it does reflect an "historical truth"—the murder of the primordial father. But Freud does not see the third possibility, which truly fits this matter: religion is above all *an attempt* to find the truth. For religion includes the attempt to solve the mystery of the world—and it makes no difference if we accept its solution or not. Therefore, religion is the product of the *experience* of the world on the part of every generation and every individual. It is not a result of any one experience, such as "the historical" experience of a certain murder or of any other event, but rather is the product of an ongoing-experience of the world as it reveals itself to man: of the heavens and the earth, light and darkness, life and death, fear of the infinite. Similarly, religion is a product of the experience of man's inner world: of the visions of the soul, the secret of human creativity, the wonder of human society. And it makes no difference what brings a person to this religious perception of the world: whether the aspiration for well-being, or fear, or trembling before the unknown, or the desire to know the cause. The religious perception of the world is perhaps the result of having reached the limits of human intellect or even the result of the intellect's failure in its aspiration to know the world, the result of the triumph of imagination and feeling over intellect and experience. But religion is an answer to the question of existence. And whoever ignores this essence and wants to see it only as a permutation of some "memory" regarding what happened in some bygone epoch truly evades the core of the problem.

5

All the more so is it impossible to explain the monotheistic faith on the basis of Freud's premise. The human neurosis that was engendered by the murder of the primordial fathers could have found its full satisfaction in the veneration of the gods. At the very most it might have led to the creation of an image of the father-gods, the heads of the families of the gods. For the image of the father necessarily includes the image of the husband; and its necessary complement is the mother. The veneration for the father could, however, find its symbol only in the realm of paganism, which distinguished masculinity and femininity with respect to the divinity. But it could not be symbolized by means of one God, hidden and concealed and transcending sexuality. But Freud claims (pp. 164ff.) that it is precisely monotheism that needs his psychoanalytic explanation. In his view, monotheism

can be explicated only through the premise that in early times there was "one personality," that is "the primordial father," who was perceived in the imagination of the sons as exceptionally strong and great and was elevated to the status of a god; and it is this ["one personality"] that returned and resurfaced in the memory of man in the image of a single, all-powerful god. But all this is just weaving together a flimsy cobweb of words. He coined the term "primordial father" as an accepted sign of the primordial fathers. But in the course of his discussion he transforms this term into one real "personality," whose murder he considers to be "historical truth." However, the primordial fathers, to the extent that they are "historical truth," were not "one personality" possessing unlimited rulership, but rather, many husbands, whose rulership was limited to their individual horde-families. In worshiping the fathers there is no tendency to transform the fathers into "one personality." The memory of the primordial fathers, therefore, could have returned and resurfaced in the memory of human beings only through the image of many father-gods, and at most in the image of the father-god of the tribe or of the people, but not in the image of one God who transcends sexuality. Or we would have to believe that the primordial memory of humanity was sufficient enough to preserve not just the memory of the primordial fathers and of their murder, but also the extent of their rulership; and despite this, this memory jumbled the fathers together and made them into "one personality," and transformed their limited rulership into "unlimited" rulership. On what basis should we accept this irrational belief?

Moreover—even this poor semblance of an explanation could be entertained only if one were to artificially limit the notion of monotheism to the image of one god, who possesses unlimited rulership and power. But historical monotheism was much more inclusive: It forbade worshiping nature, forbade worshiping idols, denounced cult and magic, and established religion on an ethical base. What connection could there possibly be between all this and the veneration of the image of the "primordial father" who was murdered and eaten? How could the cult of this "personality" with its unlimited rule over the females in the horde clothe itself in the negation of the cult and the extreme ethical demands of monotheism?

6

The failure of Freud's attempt becomes especially evident when he seeks to explain the conditions for the historical emergence of Israelite monotheism.

In order for the soul's wound to work its complex effect, a period of latency is necessary: the wound must be forgotten and operate from the hidden depths. Without this, there is no neurosis and no "compulsion." The murder of the primordial father precipitated the neurosis of humanity because it was forgotten. However, here the question arises: how can a forgot-

ten event have a historical impact, that is, how can we say that the forgotten event acts throughout the many generations that experienced neither the event nor its memory? In an individual's life, the forgotten experience works its effect owing to the continuity of the "I." However, how could a forgotten experience continue to be effective from generation to generation? With reference to this question of collective-historical memory, psychoanalysts are divided among themselves. Freud claims that the "the archaic inheritance" transmitted from the fathers to the sons includes not only physical and spiritual dispositions and not only instincts, but even the memories of events (pp. 125ff.). In truth, this is impossible. But even if we grant that this is the case, this could only explain the transmission of the memory of the murder of the primordial fathers, since this murder repeated itself thousands of times. Therefore, one could claim that it was incised into the depths of the soul. But it is impossible to conceive of a "phylogenetic" transmission of a memory of an event that occurred only once. Indeed, even Freud does not claim that the murder of Moses was preserved in the phylogenetic memory of the Israelites and that the later generations inherited the memory of the murder unknowingly. But the "analogy" of the neurosis demands that the murder of Moses should act precisely as a forgotten and hidden experience. And because of this, Freud creates a replacement for the unconscious: the "tradition." The memory of the murder of Moses was "repressed," inasmuch as it was not allotted a place in their written literature. But the memory of the event was safeguarded in "the oral tradition" (pp. 85ff.). The later prophets received the "tradition" from the hands of the Levites (pp. 42ff.). But who will not discern here the artificial nature of this attempted harmonization? The oral tradition is "hidden" in comparison to the written tradition. But there is no resemblance between the oral tradition itself and the unconscious. The guardians of this oral tradition were clearly aware of Moses's murder, and therefore it could have no neurotic impact on their souls. And as for the people, who were unaware of it, they were also unaware of it in the hidden depths of their souls. And, therefore, it had no neurotic effect on them as well. Thus the murder of Moses could not in any way have exerted a neurotic effect.

The artificial nature of this explanation becomes particularly evident in what follows.

At the beginning of the Israelite faith was the murder of Moses, and at the beginning of Christianity was the murder of Jesus. According to Freud, this is no coincidence. These murders aroused the memory of the primordial murder etc. (pp. 114ff., 129ff.). Now the necessary condition for the neurotic impact of Moses' murder was its being forgotten by the people and its being preserved in the "tradition." But this necessary condition was no longer necessary regarding the murder of Jesus. The murder of Jesus was not forgotten, and nevertheless it had an enormous neurotic impact, even much wider than the impact of the murder of Moses: indeed, the difference

in the impact of the two murders is astounding. Both murders were internal, Jewish affairs. But, regarding the first, even though it acted by way of "tradition," it influenced only Israel. Whereas the second murder, which was never forgotten, in just a short period convulsed the souls of the peoples of many nations that had no part in the murder and that certainly did not have anything about which they had to feel "remorse." Moreover, it was precisely on the soul of the Jewish people that the murder of Jesus made no impact, and it did not result in their believing in the Son of the Father. Even stranger than this is the history of Islam. In the beginning of this religion there was no murder, neither revealed nor hidden. Only after this religion already conquered the heart of the people was there a religious-political murder that convulsed a group of believers. And this time it was the murder of father and son together: the murder of Ali and Hussein. But, again, we are confronted with the inexplicable: this murder, as well, was never a forgotten experience. And here, as well, its influence was strongest precisely on the Shi'ites who did not carry it out. Those who actually carried out the murder never experienced any "remorse" for what they did, and it did not "remind" them of anything. In an entirely different category is the murder of Socrates. There is also a certain religious background to his killing: he was found guilty of introducing new gods, teaching an exalted concept of the divinity. Aside from this, Socrates—as a teacher of the youth and a teacher of the generation and as the husband of Xanthippe—was also a respected "father-figure." However, the killing of Socrates did not "remind" the light-minded Greeks of anything, even though they regretted it. And in contrast to this, they deified other men, fathers and sons, who were never murdered.

Artificial as well, is the very link between the impact of the murder of Moses, the man, and the victory of his faith and his ideas in Israel. Via this link, Freud introduces the abstract idea of monotheism into the neurotic experience and associates it with its operation. But the "primordial father" was not a teacher of religion and faith. He was venerated because he was murdered, and it was only his personality that was venerated. "The teaching" of that primordial father (that is, the regime of the father's rulership) was abolished precisely after his murder. Corresponding to this, the murder of Moses, "the exalted father-figure," ought to have resulted in the deification of his person, especially if one pays attention to the fact that the Jewish people at that time, according to Freud's premise, was a polytheistic people. But the victory of his idea was not connected at all with this process (similar to this, Buddha was made into one of the gods of the popular faith, even though this contradicted his teaching). However, in Israel, the opposite happened: The Torah of Moses triumphed, but he, himself was not made into a god, even in the period of Israelite "paganism." And the continuation of this development of the religious neurosis also deviates from the line of the "analogy." Because, precisely Jesus, the "son" who was

murdered, was himself made into a god. Freud explains, following others, the holy Christian meal as a metamorphosis of the totemic meal: eating "the body" of Jesus recalls the eating of the murdered father in primordial times. This is the explanation of the secret, "the Son is the Father." Whereas Moses, although he himself was a "father-figure," never served as substance for a "meal." It seems that history, itself, was guilty of a fatal confusion in its developmental pattern.

And not only this, but in the end, Freud's psychoanalytic explanation does not really address the key problem, which he wished to solve, namely: the emergence of the monotheistic faith. Freud does not want to be satisfied with the answer that monotheism is a manifestation of the creative religious genius of Israel (pp. 80–81); therefore he tries to explain it as a product of the Israelite neurosis. However, in truth Freud posits that monotheism actually arose in the world before this neurosis. For this is the whole point of his Egyptian hypothesis: Monotheism was already created in Egypt, and from there it migrated to Israel. But in Egypt it did not arise as a result of neurosis, but rather as a result of Egyptian imperialism (pp. 22ff., 72ff., 80, 108)! Ikhnaton formulated the idea of one god, abolished all types of cults and magic, and demanded a life of truth and justice. Moses rejected Ikhnaton's deification of the sun, and, besides this, he forbade the worshipping of idols. This is to say: Monotheism was created before the murder of Moses. That Egyptian imperialism does not explain any of this is clear. For Babylonian, Assyrian, Persian, Macedonian, Roman, and Chinese imperialism did not result in the idea of one God or in the prohibition of the worship of nature and of magic, etc. That the neurosis of the Israelites does not explain any of this is also clear. Because, after all, all these features of monotheism emerged before the neurosis. In the end, accordingly, we require another explanation.

On page 71 of his book, Freud says that his research on Moses, as he saw it, resembled a "dancer balancing on the tip of one toe." This is a well-phrased self-criticism. But this image hovers before our eyes when we read not only what he says about Moses, but also what he says about the source of religion and the origin of monotheism: time and again there appears this dancer balancing on the tip of one toe.

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In everything stated above, we assumed, for argument's sake, that there really was something substantive in the claims regarding the murder of Moses and the monotheism of Pharaoh Ikhnaton. However, in truth, these matters lack all substance.

Freud found the story about Moses' death in Sellin, and he accepted Sellin's claims, which were a true "find" for him, as if Sellin were the final

authority, since he was unable to examine their validity. However, Sellin is a typical modern biblical scholar (perhaps even too typical): He emends verses and makes up new ones at will, interprets them arbitrarily, and then "discovers" in them whatever he had read into them. These modern fanciful homilists have a particular affection for obscure verses, and it is precisely on such verses that they "base" the most revolutionary hypotheses, since in any case, no one knows for certain what they state. Sellin "discovered" the story about the murder of Moses in Numbers 25:6ff. and in Deuteronomy 34:1ff. For since in Numbers 25:6ff., it speaks about the murder of Zimri and Cozbi, and in Deuteronomy 34 it does not speak about the murder of anyone, this implies that these texts allude to a story of … the murder of Moses! Sellin found a hoard of these types of "allusions" in Hosea, specifically in: 4:4–5, 5:2, 9:7–13, 12:14–13:1 (12:13–13:1 in Eng.). He made up these "allusions" himself. For example, where the text reads: "Therefore shalt thou stumble in the day, and the prophet also shall stumble with thee in the night; and I will destroy thy *mother* (אִמֶּךָ)" (Hosea 4:5), he emends the text and translates: Therefore shalt thou stumble in the day and in the night as you destroyed your *nursing* (אוּמְנֶךָ) prophet (that is to say: as you killed the prophet, who is for you like a *nursing mother* אֹמֵן, as stated in Numbers 11:12 (כַּאֲשֶׁר יִשָּׂא הַיֹּנֵק-אֶת הָאֹמֵן).[6] And behold, an "allusion" to Moses' murder is staring you in the face. Or: "Ephraim is a watchman with my God; as for the prophet, a fowler's snare is in all his ways, and *enmity* (משטמה) is in the house of his God. They have deeply corrupted themselves, as in the days of Gibeah…" (Hosea 9:8–9); again Sellin emends the text and translates: "Ephraim is a watchman with the tent of the prophet, a fowler's snare is in all his ways, *in Shitim* (בשטים), in the house of his God, they deepened the pit (that is to say: they dug for the prophet a deep pit), etc.[7] And once again we have "allusion." Or "Ephraim, *as* (כאשר) I have seen Tyre, is planted in a pleasant place; but Ephraim shall bring forth his children to the slayer" (ibid., 13). Yet again Sellin emends the text and translates: "I have seen Ephraim *as the head* (כראש) (as a poisonous plant); he set for himself a prophet to hunt."[8] And so on and so forth. It is clear that there is no way of preventing Sellin from "finding" allusions to the murder

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[6] Translator's Note: The Masoretic text [= MT] (Hosea 4:5) reads *'immekâ*: וכשלת היום, וכשל גם נביא עמך לילה ודמיתי **אמך**. Sellin emends the text to read *'ōměnekâ*: וכשלת ביום גם בלילה ודמית את הנביא **אומנך**.

[7] Translator's Note: The MT (Hosea 9:8–9) reads *masṭēmâ*: צפה אפרים עם-אלהי נביא פח יקוש על-כל-דרכיו **משטמה** בבית אלהיו. העמיקו שחתו כימי הגבעה. Sellin emends the text to read *běšiṭṭîm*: צופה אפרים עם אהל הנביא, פח יקוש על כל דרכיו, **בשטים**, בבית אלוהיו, העמיקו שחתו. Shitim is the place where Moses was (supposedly) murdered, as "alluded" to, according to Sellin, in Numbers 25:1.

[8] Translator's Note: The MT (Hosea 9:13) reads *ka'ăšer*: and *šětûlâ bĕnāvê*: אפרים **כאשר**-ראיתי לצור, **שתולה בנוה**. Sellin emends the text to read *kĕrō'š* and *šāt lô nābî'*: אפרים **כראש** (כצמח ארסי) ראיתי, לציד **שת לו נביא**. Sellin, here, rearranges the letters of certain words, completely changing the verse's meaning.

of Moses wherever he wants. And indeed, he finds them over and over again in many places. The undisciplined and fanciful homiletical exegesis prevalent in modern biblical scholarship has made all this possible. Sellin's fable is not the only one that was accepted by scholars on the basis of such fanciful explanations. As we already said above, an event like the murder of Moses would not have been able to be hidden, and nobody would have been interested in hiding it. Rather, to the contrary, such a murder would have served in all the generations as a topic for prophetic rebuke. Sellin's fable is complete nonsense.

A few noted scholars hold the opinion that the origins of monotheism were in Egypt, and that Ikhnaton was its founder. But in reality there was no monotheism in Egypt, and Ikhnaton was a complete pagan. This mistake derives from the prevailing assumption that the essence of monotheism is belief in one God. But in truth monotheism is not an arithmetic concept, and the question of numbers is not the main issue. God's unity is only an expression of monotheism's essence, its essence being the belief in God who is not a symbol of any natural power and who is not governed by any law of existence. Where this essence does not exist, the "unity" is pagan. And, therefore, the faith of Ikhnaton was also pagan, because Ikhnaton believed in the "unity" of the sun. Here we have a great abyss dividing his religion from biblical religion. Aside from this, Ikhnaton believed in the divinity of Pharaoh and thought of himself as the "son of the sun," who was born from its "limb." And he also worshipped his father in the cult of the dead. He had his own "prophet" (a type of priest) as did other gods in Egypt. He did not abolish the cultic practices. On the contrary, he brought sacrifices to the sun. He also did not free himself from magic, but used several magic symbols. His religion was unable to develop. However, since all worship of nature is essentially magical and mythological, the religion of Ikhnaton [had it been able to develop] would necessarily have created its own mythology. Indeed, it also seems as if the link with the old mythology was not broken. The names that he used testify to this: Ra, Shu, Harakhte. In biblical religion there is no trace of deification of nature or man. That is to say, biblical religion is an absolutely new creation. It clearly follows that Moses was not Ikhnaton's "student." The hypothesis that Moses was an Egyptian, therefore, loses all historical credibility. And since it does not rest on any substantial proofs, we may dismiss it as an idle fable.

The Secret of National Creativity*

Yehezkel KAUFMANN

The Question of the Source of Cultural Creativity

The question of the source of cultural creativity is without a doubt the hardest and most mysterious among the questions of historical science and philosophy of history. The attempts to "explain" creativity through some schema of development of the spirit according to Hegel's idealistic method, and similarly the attempts to "explain" it on the basis of various conditions and circumstances, be they geographical, climatic, political, or especially economic (according to the method of historical materialism), are at bottom only attempts to cloak the problem and to ignore its real scope. It is the habit of idealists and materialists to select from among the multitude of phenomena those that are amenable to their methods to be pressed through the steam roller of the fixed law and thus be "explained," while they regard the majority of the phenomena as nonexistent. Thus they obscure the basic problem, which is *the infinite variety of forms of cultural creation.* It is a fact that wherever the power of cultural creation is given the opportunity to achieve free embodiment, it clothes itself in new and original forms. From time immemorial, human speech has been embodied in innumerable combinations of phonemes and syllables, comprising languages, expressions, and idioms, both known and forgotten. The religious imagination has fashioned innumerable personas of spirits and gods. There is no counting the legends that human imagination has invented or the permutations of tones in instrumental music and song, the combinations of lines, shapes, and colors in building and crafts, in drawing and sculpture, the variety of movements in dance, the fashions of bodily decoration and clothing, the combinations of foods, customs, laws, and the like. In every cultural domain we find an abundance of forms without limit.

We are not dealing here only with the major historical cultures. Hegel succeeded in devising the semblance of an explanation of cultural devel-

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* *Bekivshona shel ha-yetzira ha-leumit* (בכבשונה של היצירה הלאומית). Translated from *Moznaim* 13 (1941): 237–51 by Lenny Levin.

Translator's note: When Kaufmann included this essay as Preface to *Toledot ha-emunah ha-yisre'elit*, 2nd edition, he added a footnote: "This essay was published in *Moznaim* 13 (Elul 5701/1941). It contains an explanation of the general historical-cultural assumptions of my book [*Toledot ha-emunah ha-yisre'elit*]. This essay also contains a clarification of some fundamental questions in answer to my critics. In keeping with the request of many readers, we publish it as a general preface to the new edition of this book."—I thank Professor Lawrence Kaplan for reading and commenting on an earlier version of my translation.

opment because he opened his exposition with the "historical" cultures and explicitly excluded from consideration the questions of the origins of languages and peoples and all the events concerning the earliest cultures. Materialist theory followed his example. But this is only an artificial restriction of the question. There is a manifestation of cultural power in *every* human creation, even the smallest and poorest. The totality of all these manifestations comprises the problem. When we include them all, we see before us the infinite variety of human creativity on all levels. The question is: what is the source of this abundance?

It is self-evident that culture is dependent on the material conditions of its place of creation. In a place where there are no stones, people will not build stone houses, and where there is no marble, they will not sculpt marble statues. It is also true that necessity is the beginning of culture—the necessity that strikes a person and forces him to invent what is required for his survival. But the creative cultural act itself arises neither from preexisting conditions nor from necessity. Particularly the abundance of forms does not arise from them. For from the same material, people fashioned innumerable forms, and they were able to satisfy the same necessity or wants in thousands of ways. This enormous variety appears especially in the esthetic side of culture. Not for nothing did Hegel exclude consideration of luxuries from the scope of his inquiry, for by itself it would overthrow the yoke of any schema.

All the more, one cannot explain cultural creativity from the environmental milieu, as Durkheim argued, that is, to explain every cultural level of society from the life conditions of the preceding level, for the multiplicity of forms is necessarily a *primary* phenomenon that is not to be explained by a "prior" level. The same question applies to every level of culture: Where does the variety of forms come from? If this variety were not rooted in the nature of cultural creativity, it would not exist at all, and cultural development would consist only of the development of a *single* form at each level proceeding from the prior level.

The only answer that we can offer to this question is: *The creative power of the human spirit* is the source of cultural creativity.[1]

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[1] Translator's note: "Spirit" is a translation of Kaufmann's *ruaḥ*, which in this essay is used synonymously with the German *Geist* (as in *Geisteswissenschaften*, "humanistic studies"). It is important to clarify what this does and does not connote. It does *not* connote the existence of spirit as a separate substance from matter, in the Platonic (and especially Neoplatonic) tradition. It *does* connote a domain of humanly created entities—language, literature, art, philosophy, and religion—and is neutral as to their metaphysical status, as between Platonic-dualistic or biological-sociological-historical. The domain is closely correlated with the domain of the term "culture," except that "spirit" describes the human creative faculty (whether of the individual or of the group) engaged in the free, unpredictable act of the creation of these entities, whereas "culture" describes the created products or artifacts proceeding from these actions that in turn exercise an influence on the students, connoisseurs, ordinary people, and future creators raised in the

Some believe that such an answer "explains" nothing, for it merely substitutes one mystery for another. But the natural sciences also assume the existence of certain "powers" and "qualities" as ultimate givens, lacking any "explanation." Science is unable to "explain" the nature of matter, the difference among the elements, the combination of elements, the basic laws of motion, and the like. It can only describe them and provide fixed formulas, which can then be used to explain phenomena. All the more is science unable to explain truly the abundance of forms in the plant and animal kingdoms and their specific nature. It can only describe their "powers" and "qualities." If we say that cultural creativity has its source in the power of the creative spirit, we mean to say that, in addition to the "conditions," "circumstances," and "environmental milieu," there is an additional ultimate factor that is basic and fundamental and cannot itself be explained by any "conditions." It is an ultimate fact, which the various "explanations" cover over and divert our eyes from seeing. Our answer, by contrast, acknowledges this fact and emphasizes it, and this is the "explanation" it offers. To be sure, the spirit itself is among the eternal riddles of existence. But, ultimately, it is no more a riddle than the existence of matter, space, time, motion, life, and the like. All these serve us as primary explanations of phenomena. No matter what view we take as to the metaphysical essence or ultimate source of spirit, spirit is an empirical phenomenon, and a primal empirical phenomenon at that. It is the first of all things known and of every assumption of being. That it is a *creative* power we learn from its manifestations in human culture. The power of creativity is one of the empirical attributes of spirit. Imagination, the intuition of genius, the power of invention, the faculty of observation and reflection, the power of abstraction and contemplation of the essence and the connection of concepts and ideas, human desires, disinterested moral evaluation, the power of expression and symbolization, the ability to exercise influence—these qualities and others cannot be explained by circumstances. Insofar as the spirit is *creative*, it adds something of itself, drawing from its own source. One may therefore regard it as an independent source of culture, though also dependent on a complex of conditions and circumstances.

The failure of the attempt to explain cultural creativity by way of these conditions and circumstances becomes especially obvious to us when we come to the question of the creative personality, the *individual* genius. It might be possible, by a stretch, to explain this discovery or that act on the basis of conditions and circumstances. But can such an "explanation" possibly account for Homer, Plato, Shakespeare, Goethe, Rembrandt, Beetho-

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ambience in which these created products are valued as tokens of the group's identity, narrative, and worldview. In short, "spirit" in this essay is synonymous with the human capacity to produce all the items included by the term "culture," including religion.
Note: Later, Kaufmann will cite a secondary meaning of "spirit" (citing Montesquieu in *The Spirit of the Laws*) connoting stylistic essence or animating idea.

ven, and the like? The same "conditions" acted equally on all members of their country, people, class, and age. Why were they uniquely singled out from all their contemporaries and even from their family members? Their unique gifts point to a secret mystery, the mystery of *spirit*. Let us grant that they gave expression to the voice of their generation. But as to why it was specifically they we do not know. The power of creation embodied in them is a primal phenomenon, a primary cause, whose prior cause remains unknown. Someone could still say that this is not the secret of spirit alone, but the secret of *flesh-and-spirit*, the secret of matter on which spirit depends. But even if we make this assumption, we advance at any rate from consideration of "conditions" to the realm of a new eternal riddle: the riddle of the connection between flesh and spirit. How does matter generate spirit in general, and the spirit of the genius in particular? We do not know. We must therefore say, cultural creativity is determined not by the aforesaid "conditions," but by that mysterious thing called "spirit," which is mysteriously connected to that other mysterious thing called "matter." But since "matter" gives rise to cultural creativity only through the mediation of spirit, we are finally entitled to say that spirit, not the "conditions," is the source of cultural creativity!

Through this first deliberation we thus arrive at the conclusion: In its full scope, man's cultural creativity is not the embodiment of a single universal "idea" within the framework of a fixed dialectical schema, as Hegel propounded, nor the embodiment of various "ideas," as Spengler taught. Rather, it is the manifestation of the abundance of creative powers latent in the human spirit. Furthermore, while creativity is contingent on conditions, one may nevertheless see every manifestation of the creative spirit as a kind of new creation, as a new *beginning* whose source is in the spirit.[2]

Collective Creativity

However, when we observe the abundant forms and contents that are the fruit of cultural creations, we perceive that they fall naturally into different groups, each marked by a uniform complexion that is immediately and intuitively perceivable. It is this uniform complexion that determines a common impress or "style." Thus cultural creations embody different styles.

Furthermore, one finds that this diversity of styles is rooted first of all in ethnic diversity (division by tribes, peoples, nations). Just as human society assumes the visible form of ethnic groups, so does human culture divide in fact into ethnic cultures. This is perceptible first of all in language. There is no one universal human language, nor does each individual have his own

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2 On this question, compare my book *Golah*, vol. 1, starting on p. 59.

language, but languages and dialects are the property of groups. This linguistic division serves as the basis and background for the division of cultural realms.

Here, as well, we do not have in mind only the major historical cultures on which Hegel based his historiosophical speculations. Rather, we are dealing with all tribes and peoples that have lived on earth since time immemorial. We may certainly posit that the culture of every separate ethnic group starts out as an original culture, that is to say, distinct in its characteristics. Just as separate groups fashioned unique languages or expressions, so they created their own unique legends, songs, dances, and customs, and the like.

Moreover, when we speak of this primal, formative division of ethnic styles, we do not mean to assert a unity of national style embracing *all* cultural spheres (religion, art, law, etc.) as if they are the embodiment of a single "idea," as Hegel and his followers conceived. We shall return to this question later. Here we are only dealing with the style of each cultural sphere by itself. Nor do we even assume the prevalence of this unity of style in a given cultural sphere throughout the entire history of the group. We affirm only the primal fact of the existence of *different* ethnic styles in human culture.

This implies that it is in the nature of an ethnic group, *qua* collectivity, to create culture. We nevertheless assume as self-evident that the individual is the real carrier of all psychic activity, including experience and creativity. Still, Durkheim, Wundt, and others were certainly right to say that individuals participating in groups generate a special psychic energy that can be created only within groups. The carrier of that energy is the group insofar as it is a unified entity. At any rate, the ethnic group is based on commonality of cultural values (language, religion, customs, and the like). These values are born of this common existence, and they shape and perpetuate it. But the same common life that unifies a group also distinguishes it from other groups. Thus the very fact of common ethnic existence gives rise to the fostering of unique cultural values. The ethnic group is thus by its very existence a natural incubator for the creation of a distinct cultural impress and style.

Moreover, we discern in the cultural creation of an ethnic group certain organic phenomena that attest to its being a natural and uniform source of creation. The creative products of the group exhibit organic unity, developing on their own through a natural pattern of growth. An example of this is, first and foremost, language, which develops on its own out of the collective life. It is no mere collection of words, but a kind of organic creature, embodying inner laws and an inner harmony, as if it grew from within. We find a similar quality in other areas of culture. In addition, we can discern in the entire group existence a kind of organic development. Its culture is born, grows, and arrives at a climax, after which it seems to exhaust its

resources. The Hegelian rule about the times of greatness and decline of national cultures is not plucked out of thin air, even if it is not a universal law.

Furthermore, we find that ethnic groups differ in their *rank* of cultural creativity. We draw distinctions among different creative works in national cultures, and we assign them different ranks in the scale of values. Among cultures of a single period or stage of development, as well, there is higher and lower. Some nations are rich in imagination, others poorer. Some nations display a proliferation of artistic creative power, while the art of others is meager. Some nations are musical, while others are not. This difference is not dependent on time. The Roman nation came later in history than the Babylonian, the Egyptian, and the Greek, but it was not endowed, as they were, with a mythopoeic imagination or with the talent for original artistic invention. One could cite many similar examples.

An absolutely objective touchstone for this evaluative difference is this: the extent of influence that an ethnic culture exerts *outside its own domain*. The native ethnic group has always been the site of a culture's creative activity. But the domain of its *influence* is often wider than its ethnic creative site. There are cultural values that pass from nation to nation. We see that there are some cultures whose scope of influence is modest or even nil, whereas for others it is enormous. This influence is sometimes due to circumstances, such as political or economic supremacy. But the *inner* strength latent in a culture is an especially important factor. Israel and Greece exercised their influence not through their political or economic strength but only through the inner strength of their cultures. Powerful, mighty Rome was the recipient of cultural transmission, whereas Greece, the weak and subjugated was the giver. The worldwide influence of Israel began only after its final political defeat and after its national destruction. Countless times, ruling nations were conquered by the cultures of the subjects over whom they ruled. One also finds that there are cultures whose influence persists even after the ethnic group in whose midst they were created has passed from the world. Such were Babylon, Greece, and Rome.

From these facts, we learn that the ethnic group is the carrier of a specific, unique cultural creative power.*

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* Translator's note: This part of Kaufmann's argument has given rise to the misinterpretation that he ascribed the difference of national cultures to racial differences, i.e., that each nation was characterized by a specific essential "national spirit" that determined the character of its cultural creations. The difference between Kaufmann's argument and the racial doctrines current in the 1930s (when he wrote) can best be appreciated if we understand the action of "spirit" in Kaufmann's view as radically free in its operation (similar in this respect to the radical freedom of God over nature articulated in the companion essay). Precisely because spirit acts freely, its action is not susceptible to explanation in terms of preexisting material circumstances. However, the products of spirit create a cultural environment that subsequently shapes the trajectory of development of each group, so that there is a general family resemblance (falling short of strict uniformi-

The evolution of such an ethnic group is intertwined, as we have said, with external factors—geographical, economic, and political. The group is the fruit of man's war for survival with nature and with his fellow man, in which the striving for survival of the species also plays a part. A great deal of what we find in the life pattern and culture of the group can be explained by these factors—but not everything. These factors do not explain the multiplicity of forms of ethnic divisions. They do not explain the nuances that distinguish one culture from another, the wealth and strength of some, the poverty and weakness of others. They do not explain the specific constitution of a language, the construction of lexical roots, its verbal tenses, the profusion or paucity of adverbs, and the like. They do not explain a nation's richness or poverty of religious or artistic expression, its strength or weakness in power of imagination and thought. Still less do these factors explain the difference in the power of the *influence* of its ethnic cultural values on other peoples. We must therefore conclude that every ethnic group is the carrier of a unique concretization of *the creative spirit*. In each group, a specific *spiritual-national creative power*—or more concisely, a "national spirit"—is manifested. As the creative spirit is manifested in individuals, so it is manifested also in a tribe, a people, or a nation.

Symbolic Ideationalism: Hegel, Spengler[*]

The reader has doubtless observed that we have arrived at this conclusion not from considering the *unified character* of the national culture or of the nation itself, but, to the contrary, from considering the *variety* of national styles in cultural creativity generally. We say that there is a national spirit not because we distinguish a single impress in each national culture, a single unified "essence" embodied in all its values and events in all periods of its history, but because we distinguish in human culture generally a *variety* of styles against an ethnic background. "National spirit" in the sense we have explained has the basic meaning of *national creative power*. If a na-

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ty) among the cultural products within a given cultural tradition. Thus in its later development the cultural tradition is not entirely monistic and proceeds to develop with a relative degree of freedom, but still shaped by the patterns established by the original formative precedents of that tradition. The specifics of the cultural tradition are not essentially linked to racial types, but they are rather the contingent product of historical development.

[*] Translator's note: In this section, Kaufmann coins a term *idionismus simlani* which we have translated "symbolic ideationalism." The hypothesis that all the cultural products of a national group are symbolic expressions of a single concept or idea (*Begriff*) was propagated by Hegel and is characteristic of philosophically inclined historians such as Spengler who were influenced by his method. The term "ideationalism" was adopted here because it has a distinctly Hegelian flavor and is thus less likely than other terms (such as "idealism" or "conceptualism") to be confused with unrelated theories.

tion were to create a new cultural style in every generation, this would be even more reason to say it was richly endowed with a national creative spirit.

The doctrine of "national spirit" or "spirit of the nation" that was prevalent from Montesquieu through Hegel and his disciples was arrived at from considering the phenomenon of *unity* of cultural style and out of an exaggerated generalization of that unity. In this current of thought, the expression "spirit" has a secondary meaning of common "essence," "idea," internal impress, and uniform direction. Montesquieu showed that there is a "spirit" in the laws of each nation, that is to say, a uniform essential impress that is congruent with the spirit of its form of government. He similarly showed that there is a congruence of "spirit" between a nation's political-legal regime, on the one hand, and its religion, its educational methods, its mores, its economic enterprises, and so forth, on the other. This insight into the unitary character of a national culture and its way of life became a fundamental principle in the method of Hegel and his disciples. This method not only asserts that every sphere in a national culture (religion, law, art, etc.) is informed by the same impress, but it maintains (by extending Montesquieu's basic idea) that all the domains of a national culture are intertwined with each other—to wit: they all embody *a single spiritual essence*. In other words, the unity of a national cultural style exists not only *within* each cultural domain but *across* all domains. This is because each national culture has a single spiritual root—a single "idea," finding symbolic expression in all cultural values. In this method, the ideational and symbolic conception of culture is fundamental. For we intuitively sense the stylistic unity within a given cultural domain through immediate perception, without the mediation of an "idea." We recognize a Hindu temple, an Egyptian painting, or a Greek statue immediately, even if we do not perceive them as an expression of a particular idea. But this does not apply to unity of style across domains. The harmony between the music of a given nation and its architecture, its laws, its burial customs, and the like, are not perceptible to the senses. We can conceive of such a unity only to the extent that we conceive all the values of the culture as symbols of a fundamental idea or notion (as a "sign of the spiritual," in the language of Nachman Krochmal). We can call this approach "symbolic ideationalism."

Symbolic ideationalism argues, further, not only for unity across cultural domains but also for unity *across* historical periods of a national culture: a single spiritual essence is embodied in every period of a nation's history. Thus Hegel conceived the culture and history of each of the "historical nations" as the embodiment of a particular "principle." Human culture and human history flow from the striving of the world spirit to know itself and its "freedom." This striving is embodied in successive stages. The historical culture (Oriental, Greek, and Western) comprise the stages of the ascent of the spirit on its journey to self-knowledge. At each stage the spirit fash-

ioned for itself a complete world of symbols and values, as if through them it had assumed a body and become extended in space. A single "principle" is dominant in all the values of a culture. This is the spirit of the culture, its inner essence, the "idea" out of which it was created. The spirit of the culture is also the "spirit of the nation," inasmuch as it determines the character of the nation. The "historical school" of jurisprudence followed the same model. Spengler rejects the doctrine of a single world spirit embodied in successive stages. He sees cultures as separate organic creations, each of which underwent its own life-cycle of conception, flourishing, decline, and extinction. But he too views each culture as the embodiment of a unique "spirituality," and all the value products of a culture as symbols of that spirituality or embodiments of a particular "idea." In his view, Egyptian culture embodied the idea of life toward death; Greek culture, the idea of plastic perfection of the finite body; Arabic culture, the idea of the mysteries of the spiritual body; and Nordic culture, the idea of striving toward the infinite. In these doctrines, the unity of a culture in all its domains and periods follows from its being rooted in a single spiritual essence or soul.

As a flight of imaginative thought, symbolic ideationalism possesses great power. It also contains a measure of truth and has uncovered one of the secrets of cultural creation—the secret of symbolism. But as a general comprehensive method it has no empirical basis. It depends on an overly bold "reworking" of historical materials and a crude factual distortion. First and foremost, it seems to be talking about the "national spirit" or "national spirits," but in fact it *never* deals with a concrete people or nation, that is, with an ethnic cultural group. Its cultural carriers are vague geographic entities—the Orient, the West, the Northern peoples, and the like. It sets down the boundaries of "nations" and periods arbitrarily, combining or separating as suits the needs of the system. Characteristically, it does not deal at all with *language*, the fundamental cultural value. What it calls a "nation" is in fact a conglomerate of nations and languages, countries, lands, and even entire continents. It should thus be self-evident that the creative spirit of a nation of which we have spoken earlier is absolutely different from the "national spirit" of symbolic ideationalsim. It is the difference between a real entity and an imaginary poetic conception.

The Source of Unity of Group Cultures

The empirical historical view of cultural history cannot ignore the fact that the true creator of all original culture in its original existence is the ethnic group. Only by examining this real carrier of culture in its origins can we derive correct conclusions. Symbolic ideationalism is at any rate wrong with respect to this real carrier of cultural creation.

Ethnic culture is impressed with the stamp of a distinctive style. But this distinctiveness is not to be confused with the unitary character posited by symbolic ideationalism. To wit: the unified stamp of ethnic culture *does not* follow from a single spiritual "essence." There is neither a complete unity across domains nor even an absolute unity within each domain; one therefore finds different "styles" within a single nation. Within the Greek nation there were to be found such different and opposite entities as Athens and Sparta. Similarly, a nation may also contain differing styles in its different classes. We also see that there are national values that are transmitted from one nation to another. A nation may adopt a foreign language. Such a nation will then be speaking a language that was not created from its own "essence." There are religions, artistic styles, laws, legends, and the like, that travel beyond their national place of origin and are propagated among foreign nations. Even, the most original peoples that we know of received cultural elements from other nations. An ethnic culture, then, can be composite and receive stylistic influence from various creative sources. Rome, in its period of flourishing and supremacy, received from Greece mythology, poetry, art, philosophy, and science. Later it was enormously influenced by the culture of the Near East. The European nations received their Christian religion from the Near East, and this religion impressed a new stamp upon their culture, introducing alien elements into their culture and their life. Monasticism, marriage without the possibility of divorce did not fit well with their "spirit," and in any case derived from a foreign "essence." These peoples also received important cultural elements from Greece and Rome. They accepted not only the "fruit" or "principle" that had been embodied in Greece and Rome, as Hegel's theory would demand it, but fundamental forms and contents. They made themselves subservient to them or tried to imitate them. At times, they experienced themselves as an empty vessel, devoid of any culture except to the extent that they possessed it as a legacy from Greece and Rome. For generations, they regarded the art and literature of Greece and Rome as the acme of creativity, as timeless models that one could only try to emulate. In thought and science they viewed themselves as schoolchildren, whose only option was to enroll in the "academies" of the sages of Greece and Rome. They adopted Roman law as the basis of their own jurisprudence. For centuries, Latin served them as the only language of high culture. One could give other examples.

National cultures cannot therefore be considered the fruit of a single spiritual "essence." A national culture is not created out of a unique "national spirit," in the sense of an unchanging spiritual ideational entity that creates symbols in all spheres of the culture.

Nevertheless, symbolic ideationalism, as stated earlier, is not spun out of thin air. The phenomena on which it is based are empirical phenomena, even though as a theory it is suspended in midair. These phenomena require an explanation. It is a fact that national cultures possess unity of imprint

and style, although it is not comprehensive and absolute. A national culture is not a hodgepodge of evanescent forms, but it tends toward fixity, toward continuity of "tradition." Wherever there is no foreign influence, nations tend to perpetuate a tradition of cultural style for many generations. Also, an ethnic culture tends to exhibit unity not only within one domain but also to a certain extent across domains, of the kind that Montesquieu asserts. There is a harmony of "spirit" in the life and culture of a nation. A despotic government does not go along with liberal education. An ascetic religion is not compatible with gay, sensual art. A military character is not paired well with a commercial spirit. Free social development is not possible in the atmosphere and "spirit" of a caste system such as that of India. One could give other examples. Moreover, certain cultural phenomena are amenable to explanation along the lines of symbolic ideationalism. Not all cultural values are the garb of an "idea," and in any case they are not the garb of a *single* idea. But some cultural values are fashioned on the basis of this secret. Religion, together with everything that is created under its aegis, is an ideational creation. Legend, ritual, and poetry give it symbolic expression. Since in antiquity almost all elements of culture were grounded in religion, they received its ideational thrust. Religion created its symbols in architecture, sculpture, drawing, dance, and song. Dress, decoration, and social customs have a symbolic element. Law, morality, the state, the family, and linguistic expression are all ideational expressions. Not in the sense that in these areas the idea is always the first cause, but rather that in these spheres an idea—from whatever source—is apt to serve as a paradigm for shaping an image or formulating a symbol.

In that case, what is the root of this unity of formal stamp and ideational content? We cannot find its root in a common hidden "essence" embodied in all values and all times; as noted, such an assumption has no empirical basis. On the basis of empirical observation of cultural history we must say this: the unified character of a culture develops from *the power to exert influence latent in a creation* once it has ventured forth from the sanctum of the creator's spirit and become embodied in *values*, in "objectified spirit." That embodied creation possesses the power to shape images and chart a path. A society's culture is not a series of evanescent creations of the moment. A group preserves its values and imparts them from generation to generation. It is subject to the power of its values and is attached to them. Every original manifestation of spirit that influences the society and makes an impression on its life is apt to be preserved and transmitted, to influence coming generations, and to shape them in its image and its likeness. Language, religion, art, customs and laws, and the like are a treasury of permanent cultural values, of "objectified spirit" imparted from generation to generation. A society imparts it to individuals, for better or worse. These values establish a model and type. The creative powers in each generation are embodied willy-nilly in the framework of a legacy. It is thus possible to

say that a great creation fertilizes the spirit and begets its like. Thus a "style" develops. Furthermore, values influence each other across domains. This influence also comes to fruition in the revealed world of "objective spirit." In a society whose life is absolutely dominated by religion, religion has the power to exercise decisive ideational influence on cultural creation—on art, ethics, the state, and the like. The political regime also has a great power to influence the stamp of the culture. Furthermore, the culture as "objective spirit" combines with those factors that determine *the character* of the nation. Great personalities and great works shape the "spirit" of the nation, guiding its life into a certain track. And a continuity of the character that flows from the culture also fosters the continuity of the culture.

Stylistic and ideational unity thus do not flow from an occult spiritual essence or soul embodied continually in the collectivity but from the manifest power of "objective spirit" [i.e., the visible products of culture]. This can be inferred especially from the phenomena of the *external* influence of ethnic culture, which we have mentioned earlier. Cultural values can be transmitted from one nation to another, entirely foreign nation. Great cultures have a tremendous power to influence, even after the nations that created them have perished. There is thus no commonality of essence or soul here. The influence is drawn from the wellspring of power hidden in the values themselves. Everything takes place in the sphere of objective spirit. The same holds true of the fructifying and creative influence of an idea. Buddhism was propagated among many different nations, and in each place it set its impress on life and culture. The same is true of Christianity and Islam. Among different nations, in different lands and in different times, these ideas established their symbolic worlds and determined the image of cultural creativity. This is the power of objective spirit.

Absolute spirit as a universal power, the "national spirit" as the manifestation of a single "idea" or principle, the flickering of a unified soul finding embodiment in a cultural body—all these are metaphysical conceptions, which do not arise from historical experience. But the creative human spirit, the power of creation of an ethnic group or the creative spirit of a nation, the power of objective spirit to create a stylistic imprint, the power of the idea in the sphere of objective spirit to shape the image of cultural values and fashion its symbols—all these are definitely empirical historical matters.

The Source of Israelite Religion

The question of the creation of ancient *Israelite culture* and, more precisely, of the *Israelite religion* is for a scholar who wishes to remain in the realm of visible reality a historical-cultural question, one with which he is

obliged to deal in the same way that he deals with the manifestations of cultural creativity in general.

I have dealt in detail in volume 1 of this book with the question of the beginning and source of Israelite religion. I showed that the various attempts to solve this question of origin on the basis of various cultural conditions or political circumstances offer only imaginary explanations of the phenomenon in question and are only *trompes-l'oeil*. There are scholars who seek the origin of monotheism in Egypt or Babylonia, saying that the development of religious consciousness in these great cultural nations enabled the monotheistic idea to ripen. But it is clear that this explanation is no explanation. It is a fact that the monotheistic faith was not born in any nation of antiquity—nor in any other nation, place, or time. If the religious consciousness of Egypt or Babylonia brought it about, why do we not find true monotheism there? Why only "currents" and "tendencies"? In the old Wellhausen school, the view was widespread that the monotheistic idea started to dawn in Israel in the eighth century B.C.E., and its first exponents were the literary prophets. This faith was victorious over idolatry in Israel only after the destruction of the Temple. The political upheavals of the Assyrian period gave rise to the monotheistic idea, and the political catastrophe of the Babylonian period helped to complete the people's adherence to it. But the political upheavals of that period were *universal* historical events, which shook the foundations of life of all the nations. Assyria posed a threat also to Egypt and to the Canaanite peoples, and the Assyrian kings subdued and resettled many nations. Assyria, Babylonia, and Egypt suffered destructions, as did other nations. Why did these upheavals not produce monotheistic belief in any of these nations? Why did similar political upheavals not produce it in any other nations?

Therefore, it does not matter in what period we date the beginning of monotheistic faith. It is impossible to explain it on the basis of any conditions or circumstances. Monotheism is a new cultural *creation,* and the ultimate source of any cultural creation available to empirical examination is man's creative spirit. Since monotheism was born and developed only in Israel, we must say further that it was born of the creative spirit of the people of Israel.

But how and when did this happen? In recent years, the realization has advanced in biblical scholarship that the literary prophets were not the first to conceive the monotheistic idea. There is no hint in any of the prophetic writings that the idea is new. On the contrary, they rely on popular tradition and argue in its name. Thus monotheism existed in Israel before the eighth century. Some date the beginning of monotheism as early as Abraham, while others think that Moses laid the foundation for this belief. However, it is possible to say that within independent biblical scholarship there is consensus on two fundamental issues. First, monotheism came into being through a gradual evolution from pagan faith. The bridge and transition

points are sought in various ways. Some find monotheistic "currents" and "tendencies" in Near Eastern paganism, while others distinguish intermediate stages in Israelite religion itself. Among scholars, some argue that Israelite religion was pagan in its first stages, or nearly so, and the Israelite God was local or national, becoming the sole God only in the course of time. The view is at any rate widespread that Israelite religion did not originally include absolute negation of idolatry. It was at first a faith in a national God. This faith was connected with a monolatrous demand, to serve the national God exclusively. The belief in a single universal God was born only at the end. Second, monotheism was at first the property of a few, of a circle—of "Levites" of "Rechabites," of prophets and the "sons of prophets" or of members of a particular class, but in the First Temple period it was not yet a popular religion. Israel at that time was generally a pagan nation; only after the destruction did monotheism become the national faith.

I reject both these commonly held views in their entirety. Inasmuch as the development of paganism never arrived at monotheism in any nation or period, it follows that no matter how close we push monotheism and paganism together, no matter how many intermediate stages we postulate, we fail to explain the main thing: the appearance of monotheism only in Israel. Moreover, the harmonistic approach is rooted in an arithmetic conception of the question, according to which the difference between pagan and Israelite religion is a difference in the number of gods. On the basis of the numerical approach, one can find some "developmental" connection. But the arithmetic conception is fundamentally mistaken. The true difference is not numeric but *essential and radical*. I have dealt with this difference in detail in my book, but I will summarize it here in a single statement. The pagan deity is mythological and subordinate to a supreme, meta-divine order of existence that stands over it, whereas the Israelite deity is non-mythological and not subordinate to any other order—the divine will is itself the supreme ruling power. Paganism never arrived at this idea through any developmental path. Even pagan philosophy in its most exalted peaks never arrived at it. We have here an absolute *beginning*, a *new creation*, an entirely new, non-pagan conception of the world that cannot be explained by any notion of development within paganism.

In addition, I have dealt in my book with many phenomena in the life of ancient Israel that demonstrate that monotheism was not, even in early Israelite history, an isolated idea, a matter for sects or orders, but nourished the popular life and stamped it with its imprint. Religion in those times was not a "private matter," nor was there any separation between "church" and "state." Religion in all ancient nations was the very foundation of the culture, and nearly all domains of the culture were immersed in it to some degree. Religions were consequently popular phenomena. In the second millennium before the Christian era, when the Israelite religion was born, there were no religious "sects" or "orders." Every religion was popular or

strove to become popular. Even the religion of Akhenaton strove to become popular, and that was the source of the tension between it and the religion of Amon, but it did not have enough time to succeed. It should come as no surprise that the new faith also filled, in the people amongst whom it was born, the same cultural role that all religions filled. It exercised a formative influence on the people's life and culture. It became the fundamental idea of the national culture. Monotheism revolutionized the popular life from the ground up, and in the course of time it fashioned garbs and symbols in all the cultural domains: in prophecy, in the priesthood, in the cult, in the political regime, in legend, in song, in law, in ethics, and more. Such deep-rooted and many-faceted creativity could not have come about in the life environment of a pagan nation; and we must therefore say that not only was monotheism born in Israel, but the culture of the Israelite people provided it from the earliest times on with outward expression. Furthermore, this creative process started in the time of Moses, approximately at the end of the thirteenth century B.C.E. It was Moses who conceived the new idea, and it was he who brought about a religious revolution in the life of the Israelite tribes and implanted the new faith in them. From that point on, a new channel was carved out for Israel's cultural creativity. In sum, the Israelite religion is a creation of the creative spirit that was revealed in the people of Israel from ancient times and created a monotheistic popular culture.

Critics have arisen against this view. It would, therefore, be proper to examine it in the light of some of the objections that have been leveled against it.

The Historical Place of Monotheism

We shall deal here with the argument, expressed by one critic, that this view contradicts "all historical reality," "all the history of primitive culture," the testimony of "all tourists and travelers" who have visited savage tribes, and even "common sense" itself. For in every place religion begins with polytheistic belief, and monotheism is the fruit of later development, whereas my view assumes that the people of Israel developed "in contradiction to human nature."[3] But it should be clear that I do not place the beginning of monotheism in the period of "primitive culture" and prior to polytheism, and I do not attribute it to primitive tribes of the kind that tourists and travelers report (even though some important ethnologists of our time do so).[4] I date the beginning of Israelite monotheism in the second millennium B.C.E., in a period when ancient Near Eastern culture had arrived at the climax of its development. More precisely, it is my view that the new

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3 *Bustanai* 24 (5699/1939).

4 See this book [*Toledot*], Vol. 1, Book 2, 287–89, 315–23, where I have refuted this view.

religion was born at the *end* of that millennium, approximately 150 years after Akhenaton. The view that the Israelite tribes were primitive at that time can only be regarded now as outdated and unfounded, even though many still express it out of habit. These tribes had lived for many generations in the heart of the highly developed cultures of Babylonia, Canaan, and Egypt. Indeed, they preserved their special life pattern, but this did not prevent them from accepting cultural influence from their environment, especially after they had mingled with the surrounding peoples and intermarried with them. Their religion was not primitive, but they participated in the religion of their cultural surroundings—in the same advanced polytheism that prevailed in Canaan at that time, as the Ras Shamra inscriptions have now proved. In this respect there is indeed a certain connection between the development of paganism and the growth of the new idea. This idea was not *born* of paganism. But the high level of Near Eastern culture in that period certainly prepared the ground for its appearance. From its inception, Israelite religion received a rich legacy from Near Eastern culture, as I have stressed on several occasions. The history of the *Israelite people* as a people only begins with the birth of monotheism. But the *Israelite tribes* did not emerge at that point from a test tube. Prior to this they lived the life of their surroundings, and they participated with their neighbors in the same stages of development that "the tourists and travelers" report. Monotheism thus appeared in their midst after advanced polytheism. In this respect, there is no difference between the eighth century and the thirteenth century B.C.E. The question, therefore, as to *when* did monotheism bring about a revolution in their lives certainly has nothing to do with "human nature" and the testimony of "tourists and travelers." It is a fact that religious revolutions have taken place in the lives of many nations. The question is a question of the testimony of the sources, and I dealt with that testimony in detail in this book.

The Creative Spirit and the Miraculous

The view that the Israelite religion was the fruit of the creative spirit of the Israelite people was not acceptable to the critics of my book. S. D. Goitein argues that he does not know what is meant by the notions "spirit of the nation" and "original popular creation." In his view, these concepts have no reality, and resorting to them is relying on a broken reed to leap over the abysses in intellectual history, which science is unable to investigate. If so, it is better to say so explicitly and forgo all such empty expressions.[5] Ephraim Urbach expresses similar criticisms. He wonders whether the concepts "national culture," "popular creation," and "creative power of the

[5] Supplement to *Davar*, 6 Elul, 5698/1938.

nation" can explain the source of the monotheistic idea. Apart from this, he asks what import these terms have if we are going to apply them to the Israelite tribes in the wilderness. He complains that I do not deal with the question of *revelation*, to which the biblical sources attribute the beginning of monotheistic belief. In its place, I resort to concepts that are "Hegelian in origin" and speak of "collective" creation in the spirit of Hegelianism. There is, he says, a fundamental "lack of clarity" here.[6]

I have grounds for surmising that my words concerning the uniquely special character of Israelite religion and the impossibility of explaining it from the development of paganism were perceived as basically an argument for its *miraculous*, supernatural origin, but that I refrained from saying so explicitly and obscured my view through the expressions "spirit of the nation," "national creativity," and the like. This is apparently also the reason for Goitein's and Urbach's complaints. Aharon Kaminka states this explicitly. He derives from my book the view that the revelation of the Israelite religion was an "extraordinary miraculous event that is an exception to the natural order," and this view does not satisfy him. He even says, "One should not be misled by the veil that the author places over his view by speaking afterwards about the 'popular legends' and 'creation of the popular soul.'"[7]

But truly, if my words "lack…clarity" in a certain measure, this of necessity follows partly from the nature of these matters, and especially from the heavy burden of the legacy of the words we are forced to use. But whoever reads me carefully will find that they were said as clearly as possible, without any "veil."

It seems to me that after everything that I have said at the beginning of this essay it will be clear to the reader exactly what I do and do not have in common with the Hegelian and Spenglerian views. The common element is to be found only in the place where these views rely on historical experience, but there is no substantive, systematic commonality. The basis for my assertions, including my view concerning the origin of the Israelite religion, lies in identifying *the human creative spirit as an independent factor*. This is not a unitary "world soul" manifesting itself in symbols, nor a uniform "spirituality" embodied in national cultures. This is the same spiritual power that has always been manifested in creative individuals and in the plenitude of human cultural creations. It seems to me that no one will deny that "spirit" in this sense is an empirical phenomenon. Disagreement occurs only regarding the *explanation* of this phenomenon: whether creation of the spirit is to be explained entirely from "circumstances" or whether an independent power, whose source is in spirit's own "nature," is also manifested in it. At any rate, emphasizing spirit as an independent factor does not seek

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6 See *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums*, 1938.

7 See *Moznaim* 8 (5699/1939): 469–76.

to leap over "abysses." On the contrary, it rejects the attempts to leap over abysses by invoking "conditions" and "circumstances." It argues that we do confront an "abyss" here, that we stand on the edge of one of the eternal riddles of existence. But since the phenomenon itself is *empirically* observable, it is not "miraculous" in the accepted sense of that term. Spirit is unfathomable but not miraculous, and in this respect it is comparable to matter, space, time, movement, growth, life, and similar concepts.

It is furthermore clear that the "national creative spirit" is only one of the forms of the *human* creative spirit, and the same rules apply to the one as to the other. Just as there is a creative power in an individual, so there is a creative power *in a collective*. This is also an empirical phenomenon: cultural creation has ethnic domains. This creative spirit is also an unfathomable phenomenon. It is a manifestation of the creative spiritual power in humanity, it is an independent factor, and one cannot leap over it through invoking "circumstances." At the same time, it is not miraculous, only unfathomable.

Everything that I have said concerning the creative spirit of the Israelite nation is set within this *general theory* concerning the creative spirit of all human beings and nations on earth. This is articulated explicitly and with full clarity in my book, volume 1, from page 11 onward, and in other places. Monotheism is an original creation of the Israelite nation. That is to say, it is a creation of the Israelite *spirit*, and it cannot be explained by means of conditions and circumstances. But I do not assume here a "miraculous" creative faculty that was given only to Israel. On the contrary, I include the phenomenon in a framework of *universal* phenomena. Israel created an original culture, as do all nations. Its culture was a major achievement and exerted a powerful influence, the same as other major creative nations who influenced the world. To be sure, monotheism was conceived only in Israel. But Egyptian art was conceived only in Egypt, Greek art and philosophy were conceived only in Greece, and Roman law was created only in Rome, and one could go on with additional examples. This generalization to a field of universal phenomena, this assertion concerning the class of phenomenon we have here, is the only possible explanation for it. At any rate, this generalization asserts that the phenomenon is not an event that is "an exception to the natural order," for it assigns it its place in "nature," within the framework of the manifestations of the creative spirit in human life. It takes it out of the category of the "miraculous." Nevertheless, this view neither affirms nor denies belief in revelation. We are dealing only with empirical history, not with personal faith. Original creativity is part of the "nature" of human spirit, and in this respect Israelite religion is "natural." In the last analysis, however, this generalization relates to the *form* of the phenomenon. But we have already seen that cultural creations are not equivalent to each other in their *content*—and especially not in their *rank*, and a "scale" of values does exist. This is undoubtedly an especially unfathomable phe-

nomenon, and a person may say that revelation of the monotheistic idea in Israel is exceptionally wondrous in its content. For with monotheism, not only a new "style" was created. Every religion presents a new "style," especially every major religion—the religion of Akhenaton, of Zarathustra, of Buddha, and so forth—each created a unique "style." Nevertheless, all pagan religions were stylistic variants of one religious essence—of "paganism." Not so the Israelite religion, which was conceived from an entirely new idea, which divided the world into two parts: the pagan world and the Israelite world. With respect to the form, one can say that in the last analysis this creation as well is nothing more than a new unique creation of the human spirit. But with respect to content, this is not so. We may therefore assume here a unique act of providence. But with this we have already left the realm of empirical history and entered the realm of faith.

Israelite Religion and Israelite Culture

Just as the Israelite religion is not unique in the world with respect to being a creation of the *spirit*, an original creation of a people, and a *one-time phenomenon*, so it is not unique in its being *the fundamental idea of a national culture*. Not in the sense that an idea was unveiled that had been hidden in Israel's national soul for generations and always operated from its hidden sanctum with a uniform culture-creating power, but in the sense that the people of Israel's culture was stamped with the impress of the idea that was revealed in it in ancient times and that exercised a decisive influence on its life in the visible domain of "objective spirit." Thus the matter is described with complete clarity in my book, volume 1, pages 11 and following, and in other places. This phenomenon is also not unique in the world. We have already mentioned that all religions in that period filled the role of a fundamental formative factor of the culture. Moreover, the cultural operation of this religious idea is comparable to the operation of ideas in other religions that were founded in some historical period by legislators. The Zoroastrian religion also became the foundation of a popular culture, and the domain of its influence was limited to its nation of origin. Buddhism was not influential in its nation of origin, but became a creative force in the popular culture in other nations. The fate of Christianity was similar. Islam first conquered its nation of origin and afterward conquered other nations and stamped their cultures with its impress. The Israelite religion built its world within the people of Israel and was unable to expand further in the world in its original form; however, it eventually enriched the lives of other nations through Christianity and Islam.

In what sense, then, was the Israelite religion the creation of the national soul? In the same sense that every ancient religion was the creation of the nation that brought it forth. Moreover, when the major historical religions

came to different lands and adapted themselves to different environments, they absorbed elements of those popular cultures, and we may regard their local forms as the spiritual creations of their host nations in a certain respect. The Israelite religion is a popular creation in the sense that even in its initial period it enriched the national life and was not an underground growth of monasteries or orders. Surely this religion in its full stature was not the creation of Israel in the wilderness. In that period the new vision only dawned in the spirit of that wondrous individual, Moses, and through his effort a revolution occurred in the life of the tribes. However, the Israelite religion earned a world-historical status not on account of its leading idea alone, but as a result of the entire symbolic world that it created around this idea. The Israelite religion entailed a new prophecy, new legends, a new historical outlook, a new ethic, a new priesthood, a new ritual, the entire chain of prophecy, the kingdom of God, David, Jerusalem, sacred history, the vision of redemption, and so much more. Such a faith was not the creation of individuals; it was the creation of a monotheistic *people*.

Indeed, the prevailing view also allows for popular monotheistic creation in the sense we have described, but it sets the beginning of the process *after the destruction*, because Second Temple *Judaism* was at any rate a popular monotheistic creation. According to this view, the Israelite idea became the foundation of a popular culture *after* the destruction of the old Israel, after the foundations of Israelite life in their first incarnation had been demolished. This theory rests on a bold systematic effacement and distortion of the entire history of ancient Israel. The kingdom of God in the period of the Judges is a retrojection of the later theocracy; the Torah postdates the literary prophets; the Priestly Code was composed in Second Temple times; the Genesis legend is the fruit of late Babylonian influence, perhaps from the period of the Babylonian exile; the Psalms were composed mostly in Second Temple times; and so on. To this one may add the effacement of the entire distinctive Israelite impress of the creation of the early period—the early prophecy, the quest for God, the sacrifices, the festivals, and more. Not only did the Israelites worship "strange gods," but Israelite religion itself was pagan to the core. All this is based on novel interpretations of scriptural verses in keeping with the pagan template. In recent years, biblical scholarship has become aware of the falsity of some of these distortions, but it still adheres to most of them. However, whoever recognizes that the Torah precedes literary prophecy, that most of the Psalms are from First Temple times (as I will prove in volume 2 of my book), that the prophetic "kingdom of God" is ancient, and that the creativity in the First Temple period was monotheistic in all its distinguishing characteristics is forced to posit that a monotheistic *ethnic group* already existed *before* the Second Temple period. That means that Israel was a monotheistic people and that the "paganism" of the First Temple period

was truly only a superficial phenomenon, a barren after-growth that produced no cultural fruit.

Israelite Religion as an Intuitive Creation

It is well known that the development of any culture is the fruit of *an intuitive creation*, not an intellectual-conceptual one. Similarly, the *experience* of a culture in the soul of its adherents is primarily and fundamentally an intuitive occurrence. This applies not only to the overall form of the culture, but also to its i*deational* root. The root idea is intuitively perceived by an inner sense, not grasped by abstract conceptualization. Language can serve as an example of this. The structure and rules of a language are fashioned by an intuitive sense, not by knowledge of theoretical grammar. And in this manner, too, are they acquired by the individual.

We should certainly regard religion as belonging to the class of intuitive ideational creations. Religion contains beliefs and views about the world and everything in it, but there is no guidebook—at least there was none in antiquity—to formulate them in theoretical and conceptual terms. It expresses itself in signs and symbols. Whoever researches these tangible data can uncover their "essence" and formulate them in abstract, ideational terms. But they were not created through abstraction. For example, the worldwide phenomenon of magic rests on a certain conception of the world, and its actions follow certain patterns, as Frazer and others have demonstrated. But the creators of magic never formulated its "essence" and they never had any conceptual knowledge of its inner rules. Magic was created and practiced intuitively.

The same applies to paganism in general, viewed as a unified phenomenon.

I demonstrated in my book that all pagan religions in the world embody a single basic idea: that the deity is subordinate to a meta-divine order of existence. In this respect, paganism is overall fundamentally an ideational creation. But there is no need to stress that paganism did not formulate itself or define its "essence" in these conceptual terms, much less that it was *created* from such an abstract idea. It exists throughout the entire world, and everywhere it is suffused with this idea, expressed in thousands of symbols and garbs. We can formulate this idea theoretically. But in paganism itself this was an intuitive ruling principle, weaving its symbolic tapestry from the depths of the psyche in every nation and language.

If so, it is no surprise that the *Israelite idea* of a God beyond nature, supreme over all being, also came into the world in the form of an intuitive perception without conceptual formulation, creating its symbols and expressive garbs from the depths of the psyche, as I described in my book. Only by proceeding from this assumption can we open a door to peer into

the beclouded mystery of the "*Götterdämmerung*" drama that took place in ancient Israel. How did the new idea destroy the pagan world in which the Israelite tribes dwelt previously, and how did it start to build a new world from its remains? This event is covered in mystery, for we find no explicit answer to this question in the Bible. On the contrary: The Bible *does not wage any war at all* against true mythological paganism, but only against one of its incidental, secondary features—the worship of idols. This war on the worship of idols does find conceptual formulation in the Bible. It assumes the theoretical garb of arguments and proofs: "Can a man make gods for himself? [No-gods are they!]" [Jer 16:20]; "Who would fashion a god or cast a statue [that can do no good]?" [Isa 44:10]; and many more such. But it is clear that this conceptual war, superficial and peripheral, is not the decisive war. Furthermore: Since the Bible lacks any theoretical conception of the essence of paganism, it also omits to express the true inner opposition between it and paganism in formulated concepts. The primary war must necessarily have been conducted on another plane—in the sphere of intuitive creation.

The Riddle of the Biblical War against Paganism

This phenomenon, that the Bible takes no account at all of mythological paganism, not even in a single utterance, is the most remarkable phenomenon in the history of Israelite religion—indeed, is truly astounding. I know from experience that no one can deny the fact itself, but no one accepts the conclusion that follows from it. There can be only one conclusion: the biblical period was already ignorant of the true essence of paganism. Aharon Kaminka (in the previously cited article) admits that the Bible's lack of mention of true paganism is a "true and established fact." He thinks, however, that it is "one of the boldest assertions" in my approach that I assume that the biblical authors had no knowledge of it. In his view, the prophets, psalmists, and wisdom authors of ancient Israel knew the myths about the gods and the theological views of the pagan priests. Moreover, he asserts that they were influenced by these views, and that this influence may have been one of the factors leading to the emergence of the belief in a single ethical God. But first, we have no material to decide whether or not this or that Israelite author in that period knew the true character of paganism. The main question is whether or not the "paganism" practiced in ancient Israel was true paganism. In addressing this question, we should assert that if ancient Israel had, indeed, been a pagan nation, it would have been impossible that the biblical authors would have refrained from directing even one word of polemic against true paganism. Second, where is there even a hint in the words of the biblical authors that they knew true paganism? Do they not address their words to gentile nations as well? If, then, they knew what

true paganism was, how could they have believed that their arguments concerning the worship of "wood and stone" would have any influence at all on their addressees? Moreover, where do they draw any distinction between paganism and the views of the pagan priests? Do they not regard pagan wisdom, too, as sin and rebellion?

Kaminka says that the Bible's war on paganism is "a riddle still seeking a solution." Apparently he did not find in my words even an attempt to solve this riddle. But in truth, I did propose a solution, and I do not see the possibility of any other solution. The solution is this: the decisive battle with paganism in ancient Israel occurred at the *beginning* of the dawn of the new idea, in Moses's day. The battle was short. Israelite paganism was smashed to smithereens, and the new faith was implanted in the Israelite nation. Something like this battle also occurred in Arabia in the days of Muhammad. Paganism disappeared once and for all from the horizon of the Arab nation, and was perceived as from behind a cloud. Only fossilized remnants of paganism remained among the Arab people. Likewise, the influence of foreign paganism on ancient Israel was fossilized from that time on and consisted of worship of idols. The cultural legacy that Israel received from paganism—legends, laws, poems—was the legacy of *Israel's pagan past*, which in the previous period had been connected to the pagan cultural world. There is nothing in that legacy to compel us to assume contact in the later period. For this reason, the entire Bible perceives paganism through a cloud and conceives it to consist only of idol worship. We should recall that paganism was forgotten by the writers of Islam, too, in a relatively short time, and they knew it as little more than idol worship.

Indeed, once the revolution had occurred in Israel at the start of its history, the new faith began to build its special world. All of Israel's life and culture served it as material. The golden age of original Israelite creativity had begun. From that time on, it appears as if one world exists within another world or alongside it, without the two worlds touching one another. Israel is, as it were, enclosed within its own world, dedicated to building that new world. The true war against paganism is carried out through that creative labor, through weaving the symbols and garbs for the new faith. From time to time, foul streams of "paganism" pass through the people, especially from the courts of the kings and their foreign wives. But these are only superficial trickles. Neither the people nor the authors of the Bible are acquainted any more with true paganism.

Such seclusion and even such blindness should not surprise us. We find similar phenomena wherever an original national culture is born and comes into the world. There was close contact between Egypt and the other countries of the Near East. But all the artistic works that were produced in Egypt in its original period have a unified style. How is it that no elements from the outside cultures were commingled in this art? Did the Egyptian artists not see other artistic styles? Is this not blindness? You will find a similar

stylistic uniqueness and similar blindness to the outside world in every domain of original national creativity. All the more should we expect to see it in Israel, whose faith constituted not merely a "stylistic" innovation but a new creation, radically and profoundly opposed to paganism.

We have decisive evidence that this, indeed, is how it took place, supplied by the parallel phenomenon, namely, that the pagan world likewise had *no understanding of the Israelite religion*. It seems to me that no one will cast doubt on this fact, but it is also astonishing. For over a thousand years, a religion existed that would eventually destroy paganism, yet the pagan world did not understand its nature. The prophets argued, "Your gods are wood and stone!" The gentiles responded, "Where are your gods?" This was the whole debate. Even the enlightened writers of Greece and Rome considered Judaism an atheistic religion—and this at a time when the Jews were already scattered among the gentiles and seeking to spread their religion among them. Here were two worlds, closed off from each other, the blind confronting the blind!

The solution of the riddle is this: the biblical period does not know paganism, because it is a period of profound national cultural creation within the framework of the monotheistic idea. It was stricken with the blindness of creativity. As for biblical scholarship, one can say the following: since this fundamental phenomenon, namely, that the Bible does not know paganism, eluded it, the very essence of the whole biblical period eluded it as well. Since the riddle eluded it, it consequently could not find the solution either. Thus it transformed the period of original monotheistic creativity in Israelite history into a period of pagan creativity.

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Summary

The biblical scholar, historian, and Jewish thinker Yehezkel Kaufmann (1889–1963) is best known for two magisterial works: a two-volume interpretation of Jewish history, *Golah ve-nekhar (Exile and Alienation, 1928–1932), and a four-volume study of biblical religion, Toledot ha-emunah ha-yisre'elit (A History of the Israelite Faith,* 1937–1956). *Toledot* in particular is the most monumental achievement of modern Jewish biblical scholarship. No other figure, not even Martin Buber, has had such a profound influence on the work of Jewish scholars of the Bible. Whether by supporting his ideas with new evidence, modifying them in light of new discoveries or methods, or attacking them, and whether addressing his work explicitly or implicitly, a substantial amount of modern Jewish biblical criticism builds upon the foundation set by Kaufmann. The latter's phenomenological analysis of biblical monotheism as well as his critique of theoretical and methodological assumptions that are still dominant in historical studies in general, and biblical scholarship in particular, are an invaluable asset for those who engage in biblical scholarship, historical studies, and comparative religion.

The idea of this volume was conceived at an international symposium held in Switzerland, from June 10–11, 2014, "Yehezkel Kaufmann and the Reinvention of Jewish Exegesis of the Bible in Bern." This gathering was held at the Universities of Bern and of Fribourg in order to commemorate the centenary of Yehezkel Kaufmann's matriculation at the University of Bern on May 5, 1914, and to document and reassess the significance of his legacy and its reception. The symposium had three foci, corresponding with sections I-III of this volume: Kaufmann's biography and intellectual background, his impact on Jewish studies, and his contribution to modern biblical scholarship.

The volume provides a comprehensive and multi-faceted account of Kaufmann's work, through which Anglophone readers, students and scholars alike, can explore the hitherto unrecognized significance and profundity of Kaufmann's legacy. It includes not only the symposium papers but also other essays, including two testimonies by two of his students, Menahem Haran and Moshe Greenberg and some of Kaufmann's own writings—all heretofore unavailable in English—that are crucial for a fuller appreciation of his life project.

Contributors: Job Y. Jindo, Lawrence Kaplan, Othmar Keel, Israel Knohl, Thomas Krapf, Adrian Schenker, Benjamin D. Sommer, Thomas Staubli, Nili Wazana and Ziony Zevit.

Zu diesem Buch

Yehezkel Kaufmann (1889-1963) war der erste israelische Bibelwissenschaftler, der die Historische Kritik auf die Bibel anwandte und damit in die jüdische Tradition einführte. Einige betrachten ihn als «den größten und einflussreichsten jüdischen Bibelforscher der Moderne» (B. Sommer). Hundert Jahre nach seiner Immatrikulation als Student an der Universität Bern, wo er von 1914-1918 studierte, trafen sich jüdische und christliche Forscher zu einem Symposion in Bern und Fribourg, um Kaufmanns Relevanz für die Bibelwissenschaft, die Religionsgeschichte und das Selbstverständnis des Judentums zu ergründen. Der Band versammelt Beiträge von Job Y. Jindo, Lawrence Kaplan, Othmar Keel, Israel Knohl, Thomas Krapf, Adrian Schenker, Benjamin D. Sommer, Thomas Staubli, Nili Wazana und Ziony Zevit. Darüber hinaus bietet er einige zum ersten Mal aus dem Hebräischen und dem Deutschen übersetzte Schlüsseltexte von Kaufmann selbst sowie Zeugnisse von seinen Schülern Menahem Haran und Moshe Greenberg.